

## **APPENDIX C**

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Letter 139 Attachment

**From:** [Maralee Beck](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Sunday, August 21, 2022 5:12:01 PM  
**Attachments:** [CA LA Economic Benefits Report LowRes.pdf](#)

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**CAUTION: External Sender**

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Please read this into the record for public comment at the August 23 City Council Meeting.

Dear City Council:

I am writing in support of the modification of operations of the Virginia Robinson Gardens. As a longtime member of the Friends of Robinson Gardens, I know firsthand that allowing more access and expanding the ability to fundraise will have important benefits for the public, both in Beverly Hills and the greater Los Angeles community.

However, I am distressed by the way the staff report is written. It includes only opposition arguments and letters, instead of including the range of comments, both for and against. This leaves the reader with the misimpression no one is supporting the operational changes. And this is far from the truth. As of tonight, the County has received over 40 letters of support from a broad array of residents and organizations, and heard those opinions expressed strongly at the public meeting August 10.

Virginia Robinson Gardens has been nurtured and supported by the County of Los Angeles since it was bequeathed by Virginia Robinson in 1977. Programming and public accessibility, as well as its ability to fundraise in order to lessen the burden on taxpayers, are part of the mission as designed by Virginia and long considered a settled matter.

Even with the changes proposed, Virginia Robinson Gardens will continue to be a small, limited access public garden. All visitors will still be required to have a reservation. There will still be timed entry only. There will still be no parking on Elden Way. All Special Events will still abide by the ordinances of the City of Beverly Hills. Our hours of operation from November to April will remain essentially unchanged because of the shorter daylight hours, as all Beverly Hills parks operate. And the Gardens will implement all the remediations and conditions required.

Finally, I want to submit for your information a study done by the Trust for Public Land conducted in 2017 about the value of public parks and gardens in residential neighborhoods. The majority of Beverly Hills' parks are in residential neighborhoods. It should be reassuring to note the increase in property values that comes with their existence.

Sincerely,

Maralee Beck



**From:** [Beverly Hills Historical Society](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** support for Robinson Gardens.  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 11:43:36 AM

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Virginia Robinson Gardens is our City's hidden treasure. The Beverly Hills Historical Society fully supports the request by the Virginia Robinson Gardens to expand the days and hours of operation to make it more accessible to the community and better serve the public interest.

Virginia Robinson Gardens is the legacy of one of Los Angeles' most impactful female pioneers. Pioneers came in all shapes and sizes. Virginia, though barely 5-feet tall, was the dynamo who, starting in 1911, built an oasis of botanical wonders in the desert of Beverly Hills when it had less than 90 residents and almost no trees. Virginia and her husband Harry would travel the world for their department store Robinsons, She took an arborist along whose job was to source the exotic plants she found and ship them back to Los Angeles. Her African Coral Tree was the first in America and provided the source for every tree planted along the San Vicente Boulevard median to the sea.

The house was a legendary site of up to six parties a week and the proceeds of her Harvest Moon Ball benefitted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Hollywood Bowl, and she and Dorothy Chandler used the parties to attract donors to help in the construction of the Music Center.

Beverly Hills has evolved into a tourist destination but has little of our legendary past for visitors to actually experience. The County did it right, Robinson Gardens is everything Graystone Mansion should be. The historical importance of Virginia Robinson Gardens is unique. Its "as-live-in" condition makes It a treasure that should set the standard for other future visitor destinations in Beverly Hills.

Please consider approving their request.

Sincerely,

Phil Savenick  
President  
The Beverly Hills Historical Society

**From:** [robin blake](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Supporting the expansion of opening hours for Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 6:14:51 PM

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Dear Beverly Hills City Council,

I am writing to express my support for the expansion of the opening hours and days at Virginia Robinson Gardens. Allowing the Gardens to be open from 9:30am to sunset seven days a week would be a great benefit to the public, making this amazing landmark accessible more people, including families on weekends and after work.

Robin Blake,  
Friends of Robinson Gardens, Board of Directors - Liaison



**From:** [lauren brokaw](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Virgin Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Sunday, August 21, 2022 5:01:10 PM

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Dear BH City Council,  
Please read this into the record at the city council meeting.

I am a big fan of the lovely Virginia Robinson Gardens.  
I am a life long Beverly Hills resident.  
I have been attending Virginia Robinson Gardens events for over 15 years.  
The gardens are such an asset to Beverly Hills and Los Angeles !

I am writing in support of the modification of the hours, days and special use events at Virginia Robinson Gardens.

Below are a few reasons I would love to see this happen:

The gardens could be open on days when families, school children and working people may attend together.

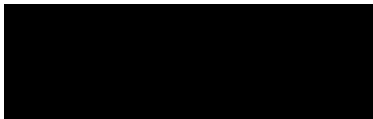
Increase the fundraising ability of the Friends of Robinson Gardens so that less taxpayer dollars are needed.

Preserve and share important historical/museum aspects for presenting area's history.

Enable their renowned Children's Science Program & tours for local & Title One school children to be better served.

Thank you !

Best,  
Lauren Brokaw



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Megan Mumby](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Virginia Robinson Gardens, please note my support for expanded access...  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 2:13:31 PM

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I am writing to support the request by Virginia Robinson Gardens to increase access to this unique landmark.

Through my work with El Nido Family Centers, I can attest to the fact that our annual event there that has enabled us to fund services and guidance for hundreds of underserved children and families throughout Los Angeles County. El Nido's Robinson Garden's events over the past 7 years have raised \$1.5M, to Provide critical support to struggling new parents, Support families experiencing hardship by providing food, housing support, mental health services, protect children from abuse, neglect and alleviate the terrible impact of poverty, steer youth away from gangs, provide tutoring and mentorship and scholarships, and help them on their path to higher education and careers;

**From:** [Evelyn Carlson](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Changes at the Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 2:50:31 PM

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Dear Beverly Hills City Council:

I support the proposed modifications of the hours, days and number of special use events at the Virginia Robinson Gardens. The benefits include the following:

Greater access to a public park, especially for working adults and families who currently have very little ability to come to the Gardens due to the 4:00 closing time and limited access on the weekends.

More programming for adults and children

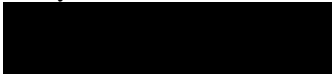
More fundraising opportunities for the Friends of Robinson Gardens. Funds raised at these events support the ongoing maintenance and restoration of the 100 plus year old estate as well as the Children's Science Program.

Greater awareness of the history of this landmark estate and the greater Beverly Hills area.

I ask you to support reasonable expansion of access to the Virginia Robinson Gardens estate.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Carlson



Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Support for the Virginia Robinsons gardens SEIR  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 1:05:26 AM

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Dear Mayor Bosse and members of the City Council,

My name is Emina Darakjy, a member of the Virginia Robinson Gardens and a resident of Pasadena. I am writing to you to express my support for the increase to the number of events that can be held and to allow more visitors to come enjoy the beauty and learn about the history of “The First Estate of Beverly Hills”.

Several years ago I was invited by a friend to a garden tour and fell in love with the place ever since. So much so that I found myself driving all the way from Pasadena to volunteer at various events. Whenever there is anything happening at the Gardens, we are always reminded to respect the neighbors and not park on Eden Street.

The Virginia Robinson Gardens are a treasure that needs to continue to be shared with as many people as possible. It offers a hands On Science Education to local school children and their teachers as well as students from Title One Schools.

There are so many unique features in these Gardens that need to be shared such as the King Palm Forest which has one of the largest collection of King Palms growing in a natural setting in all the Western Hemisphere.

The property also has a Coral Tree that was designated in 1976 as a Historic Cultural Monument and is registered as a “California Big Tree”. This tree is the mother of all the Coral trees on San Vincente Blvd.

In closing, I urge you to approve the amendments before you. This will help generate private income to be spent on the restoration and maintenance of such a cultural jewel, therefore relying on less taxpayers’ money to do that.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Emina Darakjy  
President, California Urban Forests Council

**From:** [Richard Doran](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 11:51:42 AM

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I am a professional photographer, who volunteered to teach photography to youth in El Nido's GRYD (Gang Reduction Youth Development) program for 10 years. During that time, I had the opportunity to take the young photographers on annual field trips to the Virginia Robinson Gardens. These trips served a two-fold purpose. They provided the youth with a wide variety of amazing photo opportunities, but more importantly, they exposed the youth to new experiences and possibilities. Many of these youth had never been outside of Pacoima, and these trips opened up opportunities, photographic and developmental, that they never would have had. Of all of the field trips we would go on, I think those to the Robinson Gardens made the biggest impact on the youth.

Richard Doran

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Robinson Gardens/tomorrow's City Council meeting  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 5:07:05 PM

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Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing in support of the greater hours (9:30-sunset) for the Robinson Gardens. It is an invaluable facility for both children and families to experience the outdoors, the vegetable garden, the chickens and the natural habitat features that provide us food and food for the animals on the food chain. What a great experience for the families and the children to run wild on the back lawn and enjoy the beauty of nature. Everyone who I have ever shared with this facility can't believe what a gem we have in our backyard.

Diana Doyle  
Beverly Hills resident since birth



**From:** [Regina Drucker](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Cc:** [info@robinsongardens.org](mailto:info@robinsongardens.org)  
**Subject:** Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 1:55:13 PM

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Dear City Council of Beverly Hills,

With great HOPE I ask for assistance in helping The Virginia Robinson Gardens aka VRG, become a Beacon of Welcome everyday, as well too allow expansion of its use with paid Private Events to offset taxpayers dollars. This Cherished Home & Garden is equal with the nearby Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens.

VRG is unique in that it represents a lost 'Golden Age of Glamour and Charity' not only in early Los Angeles, but it is nestled magnificently in the Crown of Beverly Hills.

VRG is requesting modification to allow a further depth of Education for the Public, and access to this rare Reality. A Fantastical Journey begins when one steps within its walls, and one is whisked away in the Home & Gardens, built by the Robinson Family. Historical and Grand, the Gardens rival Lotusland and Bellosguardo- the Clark Estate, both in Santa Barbara! Beverly Hills cannot continue its path to allowing destruction of History, would the Parthenon of the Acropolis or the Pantheon in Rome be allowed to fall to developers' whims and the mercy of hostile developers from other parts of the world, I think not. Beverly Hills is a Beacon of Dreams come True worldwide, and yet it those very historic Architectural Dreams of The Golden Age of Southern California Architecture that have mesmerized millions around the world which are being destroyed only to be supplanted with banality and square footage without reason.

Sincerely,  
Regina Drucker

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Patricia Reinstein](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Cc:** [Patricia Reinstein](#)  
**Subject:** Supporting modifications for Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 2:14:01 PM

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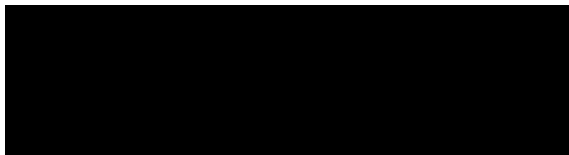
*Honorable City Council of Beverly Hills*

*I am writing to support the changes in operating hours that would expand public hours of Virginia Robinson Gardens. Being open 7 days a week from 9:30 am to sunset provides the public greater access to this hidden jewel in the middle of Beverly Hills.*

*I have attend other charitable events held at this garden and it is an amazing venue. They should be allowed limited private rentals to help to defray costs to the taxpayers for restoration and renovation of this historic site. Robinson Garden is an important part of the history of the city of Beverly Hills. It is a public park and should be allowed to have parity with other public parks in LA County.*

*Sincerely,*

*Fred M. Reinstein*





City Clerk  
Beverly Hills City Council

August 22, 2022

Our Robinson Gardens' experiences have been wonderful and we write only to help improve this magnificent resource.

We were surprised to learn that the Robinson Gardens' hours are so restrictive. We both live close to the property and would like to visit "as the spirit moves me" rather than arrange a tour in advance. A reservation or appointment time sheet for online bookings would allow greater access to individuals (or groups) yet maintain appropriate crowd control so important in the aesthetic experience.

Although we personally have time during the work week if we are to encourage the widest audience participation, weekend hours are necessary. Access only during the week penalizes so many workers and their families.

We admire gardens in general but feel that more adult education would increase our appreciation.

I (GG) was born in Los Angeles and attended Beverly School schools (El Rodeo '64, BHHS '68). I am proud of Beverly Hills and the important role Robinson Gardens has played in my city's history. I wish more people were aware of this relationship.

I (DG) have lived in Beverly Hills since the '60s.

We trust you will take this letter in the spirit in which it was written. These are comments and ideas from concerned citizens whose goal is improving a truly magnificent venue.

We request that this letter be read into the record at the City Council Meeting.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Gartsman



Gary Gartsman



**From:** [Lisa Gimmy](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Virginia Robinson Gardens: Support for expanded access  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 9:46:48 AM

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To the Members of the City Council:

I am writing in support of expanded access to the Virginia Robinson Gardens. The facility currently has such limited hours for visitation that many people who work or have families simply cannot visit.

For the past forty years the Friends of the Robinson Gardens and the County have demonstrated sensitivity to the neighbors and community in operating the facility. I urge you to allow greater public access.

**Lisa Gimmy, ASLA, LEED AP**

Lisa Gimmy Landscape Architecture  
Helms Bakery District  
8800 Venice Blvd. Suite 216  
Los Angeles, CA 90034  
Tel: (310) 202-8320 ext. 1  
Fax: (310) 202-8350

[www.lglandscape.com](http://www.lglandscape.com)

**From:** [Sandra Harris](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 5:42:50 PM

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Hello

I am writing to express support for allowing a change in the days, hours and events allowed at Virginia Robinson Gardens. In particular, there would be benefits to the community by providing enhanced access to the education program. I am a new member, but have volunteered for several years at various events. What I am particularly impressed by is the children's education program. I had known about this program, but until I volunteered to help pack boxes to be sent to schools, I had no idea the quality and volume of materials provided to teachers and classes. We hear back from teachers about how beneficial the program is and how much they appreciate it. This is a significant outreach to the community of Los Angeles County, and it benefits us all to allow increased access.

Thank you for your time,  
Sandra Harris

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**From:** lkhartigan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 3:07 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Robinson Gardens

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Dear Beverly Hills City Council:

I have been involved with preserving the Robinson Gardens since 1991. As a fifth generation Angeleno, it saddens me that so few of the old landmarks — whether buildings or parks and gardens — that embodied our Southern California way of life remain to be seen and enjoyed. I have watched as the places we can come together and enjoy as a community become scarcer and more difficult to access.

I am writing in support of the modification of the hours, days and number of special use events at Virginia Robinson Gardens. The change in operations at the Virginia Robinson Gardens will create new public benefits and further the Mission of the Gardens. By allowing the Gardens to remain open from 9:30 am to Sunset seven days a week, the public it serves will have greater access to an amazing national registry landmark and museum that celebrates an important aspect of the history of Beverly Hills.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Laurie K. Hartigan

**From:** [suzanne.hertfelder](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Support of Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 5:08:44 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the modification of hours of operation, days open to the public and special events at Virginia Robinson Gardens.

I have visited this historic jewel in our city on numerous occasions and have brought visitors both local and out of town guests to enjoy this unique example of an early California Estate with its rare and exotic flora.

I have attended numerous charity events at Robinson Gardens and have found that they follow the highest standards of quality and care. I was able to share several evenings with my 93 year old mother-in-law because of the emphasis on safety.

Robinson Gardens takes great care in organizing the valet parking and shuttles to minimize impacts on guests and the neighbors.

One of the events I was privileged to attend raised over a hundred thousand dollars for a charity that provides food, education and training to at risk youths throughout Los Angeles County.

My personal opinion, the overall good outweighs any possible objections and all of Los Angeles County would be well served to allow more public access to the Virginia Robinson Gardens.

Warmest regards,  
Suzanne Hertfelder

Sent via Suzy's iPhone

**From:** [Adrienne Horwitch](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 12:51:15 PM

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Dear Beverly Hills City Council,

I have lived in Beverly Hills for almost 40 years, and am a member of the Friends of Robinson Gardens. I urge you to support the proposed changes in operations at the Gardens because they will provide the community with more access to this beautiful historically designated County facility, and help broaden the range of programs the Friends offer to schools in Beverly Hills, as well as, across the greater Los Angeles area. Especially to the Title 1 schools we work with in science education.

As your own report points out, there are no new noise impacts to the neighbors. And as we have always done in the past, we will apply all mitigations required for traffic and parking. Virginia Robinson Gardens has always required visitors to have a timed reservation, and that will, of course, continue. The additional hours and allowed number of visitors will be managed as before, with no disruption to the neighborhood.

Allowing the Virginia Robinson Gardens to stay open to sunset is the right thing to do. All Beverly Hills parks and gardens are open until sunset and most of them are in residential areas. This is the nature of green spaces in cities. Robinson Gardens acts as a buffer to development. It's trees and landscape are part of the ecosystem that helps keep the air clean in the area.

Cars cannot park on Eldon way, so there is no commotion from doors opening or closing or engines idling. School buses cannot drop off at the Gardens, and the children walk in quiet single file to the property.

Please consider all the good and value that these changes can bring. I appreciate the time you have given to hear support for Virginia Robinson Gardens. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Adrienne Horwitch



**From:** [Janice Jerde](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 1:48:33 PM

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Dear Beverly Hills City Council,

I am writing this letter in support of the Virginia Robinson Gardens ability to have more open hours.  
I am an Architect who has had much pleasure sharing the Gardens & their History with other Professionals local and from around the World.  
It is not only a Beautiful & Historic Place it also provides benefit to Adults and school age children through education.  
I believe the school age children who have access to the Gardens are often able to see nature first hand as well as open their imaginations and teach them to dream for more.  
There are many reasons to make this request.  
Please consider this request which will benefit so many .

Sincerely,  
Jaice Ambry Jerde AIA





The George R. Kress House

Julie Yom, AICP  
County of Los Angeles  
Dept. Parks and Recreation  
Planning Division  
1000 South Freemont Ave  
Unit #40 A-9 West Third Floor  
Alhambra, CA 91803

March 12, 2022

Dear Ms. Yom,

I am writing to you to offer my support for the proposal to change operations to expand the public hours for The Virginia Robinson Gardens.

How fortunate was the City of Los Angeles to have Virginia Robinson live here. Her generosity and foresight to bequeath her estate and gardens to the city was nothing less than exceptional.

The proposed expansion of hours will allow a greater use and appreciation of this beautiful property for all of the citizens of Los Angeles. By making this gift to the city, Virginia Robinson demonstrated her desire to increase the cultural opportunities available to its citizens. Those opportunities are only available if the doors and garden gates are open.

The foundation of this asset was created with the original gift, and it has now been built upon by the community that surrounds it, financially and with countless hours of volunteer help. Under the guiding hand of Tim Lindsay and The Friends of Robinson Gardens, this garden has more than flourished, it is in full bloom. Please continue this "pay it forward" gift by allowing more use of this priceless cultural asset.

As the owner of another National Register of Historic Places property in the neighborhood, I can only tell you from my experience the pure joy and excitement that people experience when they are allowed to visit and experience the past for a few hours. It transports, inspires and enriches everyone's life. Virginia Robinson understood this.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rodney Kemerer

cc: Tim Lindsay  
Betty Goldstein  
Maralee Beck



**From:** [MCCARTNEY Worthy \(CAR-US\)](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Your kind action needed for Virginia Robinson's gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 1:43:47 PM

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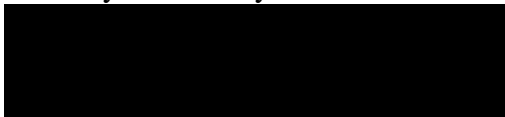
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Dear City of Beverly Hills,

Please see below my request for the Virginia Robinson's Gardens in Beverly Hills:

1. Please allow the Gardens to be open from 9:30am to Sunset seven days a week gives the public it serves greater access
2. Being open more will give the renowned Children's Science Education Program & tours for local and Title One school children more flexibility to attend and allow the program to reach more children
3. In addition, allow more adult education classes promoting environmental sustainability and lectures to be offered to the public
4. More days and hours open benefit the public by making it accessible to families on weekends and after work
5. Making the Gardens available for private rental on a limited basis helps the Gardens to be less dependent on taxpayer dollars. This is a standard operation for County and City facilities such as LACMA, The Wallis, Descanso Gardens and other parks and gardens, etc.
6. This also gives the public more access to an amazing national registry landmark/museum that celebrates an important aspect of the history of Beverly Hills

Thank you,  
Worthy McCartney



From: [REDACTED]  
To: [City Clerk](#)  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Increase public hours of access to the Virginia Robinson Gardens  
Date: Monday, August 22, 2022 4:31:19 PM

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Dear the Honorable Members of the Beverly Hills City Council,

I have been a member of the Friends of Robinson Gardens since 2006 and a board member for the last several years. I am the editor of the VRG eNewsletter, the Happenings. I have always found Robinson Gardens to be a wondrous, beautiful estate. The minute you enter the grounds, you feel the serenity and the fabulous magic of the place which is a much-needed sanctuary in our hectic world. It is important to conserve and restore the beauty of this hidden gem and its historic gardens and home. Children who come to this garden always learn much about nature, science, and healthy eating. Some children even called it a life-changing experience. The Friends' education programs are also very enriching and unique. Our fabulous annual Garden Tour inspires all who attend and allows our local talented florists, interior designers, and landscape designers showcase their talents for the community.

The ladies I have worked with are all extraordinary, gifted, and kind women who are passionate about the gardens and how they can enrich the lives of children and adults alike. I think VRG is a unique and extraordinary place of beauty, splendor, and serenity that is well cared for by its very capable board, staff, and special Superintendent Diane Sipos. It is important to safeguard our cultural heritage. It is worthy of support by our community and to increase the hours of public access for such a special and inspiring sanctuary.

Respectfully,  
Linda Meadows

**From:** [Kevin Lee Miller](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** support for Virginia Robinson Gardens expanded hours  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 11:48:34 AM

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Beverly Hills City Clerk,

My wife and I fully support making Virginia Robinson Gardens more accessible to the public through expanding the hours and days it is open. Presently, the times the property is open make it difficult for people with day jobs to visit.

A trip to Robinson Gardens is a truly unique experience and the more people who can enjoy this gem the better. We look forward to taking our grandson there soon.

Additionally, we believe facilitating special use events would make it possible for the Friends of Robinson Gardens to hold fundraisers that would support property maintenance and special educational programs without relying on taxpayer dollars.

Thank you,  
Kevin & Valerie Miller

**From:** [Patricia Reinstein](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Cc:** [Patricia Reinstein](#)  
**Subject:** Modifications concerning Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 2:25:11 PM

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Honorable City Council Members of Beverly Hills,

As a resident of Los Angeles County, I stand in favor of the modification of the hours, days and number of special use events at Virginia Robinson Gardens. These changes will be of benefit to visitors who cannot visit during current hours. In this tumultuous time, everyone needs to feed their soul with more access to this wonderful garden. It was Mrs. Robinson's intent to make the garden available to the public, especially families who are more likely to visit after work hours or on weekends.

As a taxpayer, I favor the proposal to increase the number of private rentals that are allowed. This would help alleviate some of the tax money that is spent for maintenance of the home and property. Beverly Hills should be proud to be the home of this national historic property and help to keep it alive.

I have attended education classes that promote sustainability. I have visited with my grandchildren who learned from docent led tours about kitchen gardens, where the variety of plants come from that are found there. Children's tours are often given to Title I schoolchildren who greatly benefit from the fresh clean air and learn how to plant their own gardens when possible. The Friends of Robinson Gardens has sent out over 4000 science kits to Title I children since the beginning of COVID.

The rich history celebrates the early days of Beverly Hills and its founders and should be shared with all.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Reinstein



**From:** [Lewis Perkins CFP® CLU®](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Cc:** [Robinson Gardens](#)  
**Subject:** As a Docent of Robinson Gardens.....  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 9:00:15 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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City Council of Beverly Hills,

I've been a docent doing tours of Robinson Gardens in Beverly Hills through the seasons. Each person who saunters through the gardens and structures is filled with a joy from the fresh view and elaborate gardens. As well, there is a sense of history about California and the growth of the area appreciated by foreigners and out-of-state residents. Thank you for supporting their endeavor to expand use of the facility for more to enjoy & learn.

Regards,

*Lewis Perkins*

Financial Services, CFP® MBA CLU®  
Comprehensive Financial Solutions, Inc.  
[www.ComprehensiveFinancial.net](http://www.ComprehensiveFinancial.net)  
[LewisPerkins@ComprehensiveFinancial.net](mailto:LewisPerkins@ComprehensiveFinancial.net)

(310) 453-2121 - office	1102 Aviation Blvd., Suite B
(310) 801-8198 – mobile	Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
(310) 453-9121 - fax	Mail: PO Box 3389 Santa Monica, CA 90408



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Thank you.

**From:** [Kerstin Royce](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment participation  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 4:34:57 PM

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Please read this into the records.  
Dear City Council,

[REDACTED]

We support the modification of the hours, days and special use events at the Virginia Robinson Gardens. This change will be of great benefit to the public, as that was Virginia's wishes when she gave her estate to the County of Los Angeles in 1977.

There is a renowned Children's Science Education Program and tours at the Robinson Gardens, and the children are encouraged to bring their families to visits. Expanding visiting hours would allow children to attend and visit with their parents.

More adult education classes would greatly serve the public, such as yoga, gardening, bee classes and water conservation as just a few examples.

Making the gardens available for rentals on a limited basis helps the gardens to have financial stability and thus be less dependent on taxpayer dollars.

And giving the public more access to this amazing national registry landmark/ museum benefits Beverly Hills as well as it will give support to local restaurants and shops.

Respectfully, Kerstin and George Royce

Sent from my iPad

---

**From:** Zalephotoart <richard@zalephotoart.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 22, 2022 1:25 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Robinson Gardens

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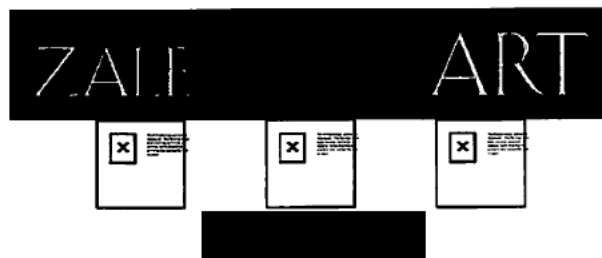
Dear Beverly Hills City Council:

I am writing in support of the modification of the hours , days and special use events at Virginia Robinson Gardens because they will:

- 1) Allow the Gardens to better serve the community and its mission
- 2) Be open on days when families, school children and working people may attend together.
- 3) Increase the fundraising ability of the Friends of Robinson Gardens so that less taxpayer dollars are needed.
- 4) Preserve and share important historical/museum aspect for presenting area's history
- 5) Promote a historical treasure on the National and local landmark registries
- 6) Will allow renowned science program & tours for local & Title One school children to be better served

A treasure such as Robinson Gardens should be seen and with proper respect shown for its community this should be an attainable goal.

Thank You,  
Richard Rubins



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**From:** [Marcella Ruble](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Support for the suggested changes at the Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 3:09:55 PM

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Dear Beverly Hills City Council:

I support the proposed modifications of the hours, days and number of special use events at the Virginia Robinson Gardens. The benefits include the following:

Greater access to a public park, especially for working adults and families who currently have very little ability to come to the Gardens due to the 4:00 closing time and limited access on the weekends.

More programming for adults and children

More fundraising opportunities for the Friends of Robinson Gardens. Funds raised at these events support the ongoing maintenance and restoration of the 100 plus year old estate as well as the Children's Science Program.

Greater awareness of the history of this landmark estate and the greater Beverly Hills area.

I ask you to support reasonable expansion of access to the Virginia Robinson Gardens estate.

Sincerely,  
Marcella Ruble

Contact information:





**From:** [Erika Safir](#)  
**To:** [Megan Mumby](#)  
**Subject:** In Support of the Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 9:40:30 PM

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Dear Beverly Hills City Council,

>

> I am writing to share my support for extending the hours and number of special events allowed for the Virginia Robinson Gardens.

>

> As one of the most beautiful public gardens in Beverly Hills and Los Angeles, the current hours restrictions make it nearly impossible for most of the public to enjoy them. Extended hours would allow people who have traditional working hours time to visit the gardens, and better serve the community as a public good.

>

> In addition, as a 3rd grade student, I vividly remember my tour at the gardens and learning about plants for the first time through their Children's Science Program. It is vital that this learning space be easily accessible for more children to have that experience, and increased hours would allow for more tours for local and title one schools to participate.

>

> Allowing increased events would give the gardens a chance to fundraise more often, easing the burden of tax dollars to keep the gardens beautiful.

>

> These gardens are enchanting and they were left to the city to be used for the public good. It is the city's duty to Increase accessibility for the public to use this gift.

>

> Best,

> Erika Safir

>

**From:** [Sakatani, Robert](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Attention: The City Council of Beverly Hills Fw: Letter of Support of the Virginia Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 4:13:09 PM

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**From:** Sakatani, Robert  
**Sent:** Monday, August 22, 2022 4:07 PM  
**To:** [jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov) <[jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov)>  
**Subject:** Letter of Support of the Virginia Robinson Gardens

Dear Ms. Ms. Jui Ing Chien, Park Planner:

My name is Robert Sakatani, a third-grade teacher with the Los Angeles Unified School District at 186th Street Elementary School in Gardena. I am writing to you to ask for your support of the continued funding and operations of the Virginia Robinson Gardens in Beverly Hills.

This facility has been an invaluable resource for educating my students and their families for over three years. I continue my relationship and support of this Los Angeles County historic place because of their dedication to educating and enriching the lives of students who are from underserved, lower socio-economic communities in Los Angeles. During the start of the Pandemic, they provided over 150 Standards-based health and science kits for students to learn about the origin of their food and how to make healthier choices in their diets. The Friends of Virginia Robinson Gardens have provided bus stipends so my students can attend their field trip free of charge. The immaculate grounds of this historic estate open their eyes to the wonder of nature, the beauty of art, and the joy of travel.

It is my understanding that the Virginia Robinson Gardens is facing budget and operational cuts. This will be detrimental to the continuance and growth of their educational program. On the contrary, this well-managed facility could serve more of the community by extending their current hours so more students and their families can benefit from their programs. Extended hours of operations can allow them to offer classes that interest the public and the surrounding Beverly Hills community. The beautiful grounds could be used to hold fundraising events or rented for private events to offset their budgetary deficits.

In closing, it would be a shame if Los Angeles public officials were not in favor of bolstering their support of this important historic place that should be shared by all. This was the mission statement of the Robinson family.

Sincerely,

Robert Sakatani



**From:** [Phil Savenick](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 11:49:29 AM

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I personally support the request to expand accessibility to Virginia Robinson Gardens.

It is a much needed attraction for visitors and residents. Unfortunately, because of the restrictions on when it can be visited, it is difficult for working families to fit into the available times and size quotas.

The charity events we have attended at Robinson Gardens have raised over a million dollars for family services. They also host botanical classes photographic expeditions, and healthy eating events for our County's most underserved children.

Making it more accessible will help keep it self-sufficient (and able to afford rising costs of water in these changing times.) Please consider approving their request. The public good for thousands outweighs any minor annoyance to the residents of a few nearby estates.

Phil Savenick  
Beverly Hills Homeowner

**From:** [Bob & Sherry T](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 9:00:48 AM

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Dear Honorable City Council,

Robinson Gardens is a historical treasure on the National and local landmark registries.

I've toured the Gardens, many times.

I feel the Gardens should be open when working people, school children, and families may attend together.

I support the expansion of the hours, days, & special use events.

Cordially,  
Sherry Berk Tedeschi

Alison Terry  
Landscape Architect

August 22, 2022

City Clerk  
City Council of Beverly Hills

Re: Virginia Robinson Gardens

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors:

I am writing in support of the modification of the hours, days and number of special use events at Virginia Robinson Gardens. The change in operations at the Virginia Robinson Gardens will create new public benefits and further the Mission of the Gardens.

I am the Historic American Landscapes Survey Liaison for the American Society of Landscape Architects. I have been working on a historic documentation of the six-acre Gardens for the past several years and am continually struck by what a gem the Gardens are for the public. Increasing the accessibility of the Gardens will allow more people to experience this cherished landmark/museum that celebrates an important aspect of the history of Beverly Hills. Allowing the Gardens to be open from 9:30 am to sunset seven days a week gives the public the opportunity to experience the horticultural and architectural beauty that Virginia Robinson created and bequeathed to the public. It would allow more families to visit after work, and enable local education tours, including Title One school children, more flexibility to attend and experience the beauty of the Gardens.

The Gardens allow visitors to capture a glimpse of old Beverly Hills. The mature plantings and architectural design that nestles into the topography are perfect teaching points promoting environmental sustainability and the value of landscape in our increasingly urban world.

Sincerely,

A black and white image of a handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Alison C. Terry".

Alison Terry  
HALS Liaison, ASLA

**From:** Jessica Varone [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 2:16 PM  
**To:** City Clerk <CityClerk@beverlyhills.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Public comment - 8/23/22 City Council Formal Meeting Item G.1

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**REVISION!**

Honorable Mayor Bosse, Vice Mayor Gold, and Councilmembers,

I'm a new Beverly Hills resident and previously lived nearby in Los Angeles for several years. I am writing in support of the modification of the hours, days and number of special use events at Virginia Robinson Gardens. The change in operations will benefit the public at large and further the mission of the Gardens, specifically by giving the public more access to an amazing national registry landmark/museum that celebrates an important aspect of the history of Beverly Hills. Additionally, more days and hours open benefit the public by making the gardens accessible to families on weekends and after work.

I believe these changes can be made in a way that maintains the quality of life that residential neighbors of the Gardens have gone to expect.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Varone

**From:** [Rose Lane Farms](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 8:51:27 AM

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Hello City Clerk

I am an advocate of Robinson Gardens and am in support of the modification of hours, days, and special use events at the gardens.

This will allow the garden to better serve the community and its mission and have more flexible hours to accommodate more people's schedules

The garden is a gem and offers such a treasure to all which is why you need to support the modification

Lynne Vinkovic



From: [Clare Wagner](#)  
To: [City Clerk](#)  
Subject: Support for extension of hours and number of events at Virginia Robinson Gardens  
Date: Monday, August 22, 2022 2:18:50 PM

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August 22, 2022

Dear City Council of Beverly Hills,

This letter supports the critical need to expand the hours of operation and number of events at Virginia Robinson Gardens (VRG).

VRG is located in an area easily accessible to the vast majority of Los Angeles County residents. It is a rare treasure intended to be enjoyed by visitors of all ages to teach a greater appreciation of gardens and historical garden design, and architecture and design.

Under current County restrictions, visitors can only visit VRG Mondays through Fridays, 9am to 4pm. This means that a huge population is cut off from the opportunity to visit due to school, work and other work week obligations. The Gardens operating hours MUST be expanded to allow a larger segment of the population to visit and enjoy firsthand the beauty and uniqueness of this County treasure.

The number of “events” at VRG also needs to be increased. These revenue generating events serve a dual purpose of introducing guests to VRG and increasing **private revenue** for its support. Bringing in outside funds results in less tax dollars needed to preserve and maintain our glorious VRG.

I hope that serious consideration will be given to this request. Thank-you.

Sincerely,

*Clare Wagner*

**From:** [Seeta Zieger](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Robinson Gardens  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 3:50:01 PM

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Dear Beverly Hills City Council,

I am writing in support of the modification of the hours, days and number of special use events at Virginia Robinson Gardens. The change in operations at the Virginia Robinson Gardens will create new public benefits and further the Mission of the Gardens:

- Allowing the Gardens to be open from 930a- sunset seven days/week gives the public greater access to this amazing piece of Beverly Hills' (and California) history.
- I have learned so much about horticulture by attending docent led tours (Kate Oakland is amazing). This knowledge would be interesting and helpful to young and old!
- The Gardens could allow more educational classes- especially focused on sustainability and environmentally friendly landscaping tips.
- Making the Gardens available for private rentals on a vetted and limited basis would help the Garden become more fiscally independent. It is my understanding that many County & City facilities do the same (The Wallis, Descanso Gardens, LACMA, etc.)

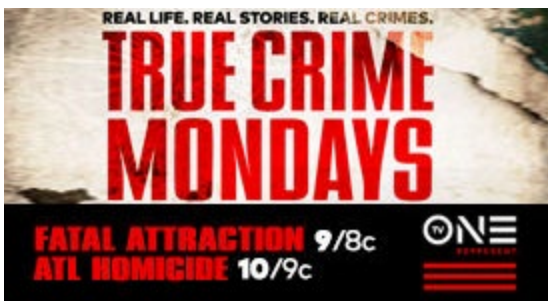
The Virginia Robinson Gardens is truly one of Beverly Hills' hidden treasures.

Thank you for your consideration,

Best,  
Ms. Seeta Zieger

**Seeta Zieger**

VP, West Coast Advertising Sales & Marketing, Ad Sales and Marketing  
O: 310.284.3725 C: 646.708.5663  
1800 Century Park East Suite 600, Los Angeles, CA 90067



**From:** [laurelle.laurellejohnson.com](mailto:laurelle.laurellejohnson.com)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Robinson Garden Public comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 10:28:17 PM

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Thank you Mayor and Vice Mayor, for the time tonight.

I am Laurelle Johnson, a docent at the Virginia Robinson Gardens. I have been so for the last 18 months and had the additional responsibility of answering phones 2x a week for four hours a day. The garden hosts two tours a day max 24 people per tour. Rarely have we seen 24 people show up for a tour. Many rsvp, pay their fee, but never show up. So it becomes a small group, making few noises, generally ohhhh or wow or a question.

During 2021 I was stymied from going up to the house and leaving the house via Eldon drive. A neighbor was remodeling their house and trucks, food trucks and personal vehicles of the workers often blocked the street. I had to wait 15 minutes, one time, while they unloaded materials.

When the groups makes its way to the King Palm Forest (on the east side) the neighbors dogs will, if they are outside, begin to bark, disrupting the talk and quiet of the tour. We do not complain about the dogs, we just move the group along. Same with any other construction going on with neighboring houses.

I invite everyone to come for a tour, enjoy the quiet and see beauty of the garden to understand the impact this little gem has on it's visitors.

Thank you for your time  
Laurelle Johnson  
[laurelle@laurellejohnson.com](mailto:laurelle@laurellejohnson.com)  
WhatsApp: 8185126477

**From:** [Antony Spencer](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Cc:** [cityclerk@bevelyhills.org](mailto:cityclerk@bevelyhills.org)  
**Subject:** Re: Virginia Robinson gardens Noise report  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 23, 2022 6:53:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [VRG - Noise.pdf](#)  
[VRG - Noise.pdf](#)  
[VRG - Noise.pdf](#)

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<VRG - Noise.pdf>

On 23 Aug 2022, at 07:58, Antony Spencer <ais@ags.uk.com> wrote:

Dear vice chair

Thank you very much for spending so much time with me this morning which is much appreciated.

I enclose here with a noise report that I asked my consultant to produce for me ,as a briefing paper .

This is a very high level note ,I am sure that your noise department/ professionals will be able to endorse the contents .

I look forward to seeing you this evening

Best wishes

Antony Spencer

<VRG - Noise.pdf>

## PROJECT NOTE

DOCUMENT CONTROL			
<b>DOCUMENT TITLE</b>	VIRGINIA ROBERTS GARDEN (VRG)	<b>REVISION</b>	R00
<b>DOCUMENT NUMBER</b>	0051346-0820-0	<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	7 <sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021
<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	INCREASED USAGE OF VRG - NOISE	<b>AUTHOR</b>	DANI FIUMICELLI
<b>STATUS</b>	ISSUE	<b>CHECKED</b>	JS
<b>ISSUED TO</b>	ANTONY SPENCER	<b>PASSED</b>	DB

### INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Project Note provides comments regarding the noise issues associated with the proposed Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the increased usage of Virginia Robinson Gardens, 1075 Carolyn Way, Beverley Hills, CA (VRG).

### UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROPOSAL

- 1.2. It is understood that the proposed changes to the use of the VRG will mean a considerable increase in activity with a doubling of daily visitors, a 6-fold increase in events, including use of amplified sound, and an extension of activities from 4pm to sunset (which is understood to be in the mid-evening around 8.00 pm in mid-summer), with associated increases in vehicular traffic to and from the VRG.

### BASELINE BACKGROUND NOISE LEVELS AND AMBIENT SOUNDSCAPE

- 1.3. The effect of noise on people and the use of their homes not only depends on how loud the noise is in terms of noise level, and any relevant regulatory controls; but also, how the noise in question relates to existing background noise levels and the ambient soundscape.
- 1.4. For example, this would include considering the following:
  - What might be the difference between representative background noise levels at outdoor amenity spaces at residential properties and the predicted noise from VRG? and,

- What might be the increase in noise level at outdoor amenity spaces at residential properties due to the predicted noise from VRG? and,
- Does the noise from VRG contain characteristics that increase its impact? For example, the low frequency bass thump of modern amplified music and the information content of amplified speech mean that the noise has a greater impact compared to the relatively anonymous sound such as steady traffic noise from busy but distant highways.
- How might the noise from VRG contrast or blend with the existing soundscape at outdoor amenity spaces at residential properties? i.e. how congruous will the noise from VRG be in the context of the existing sounds making up soundscape in the area.

- 1.5. Consequently, any noise assessment for the SEIR should include a comprehensive baseline noise survey and observations of the soundscape at locations representative of residential properties around the VRG.
- 1.6. Background noise levels and the ambient soundscape typically vary depending on the time of the day, evening or night, between weekdays and weekends day of the week, and with the weather conditions.
- 1.7. Therefore, any baseline survey should be sufficiently long enough to capture sufficient data so that outliers and anomalous values can be rejected and there remain enough values to be able to understand the variability of the baseline noise levels through day, evening and night periods and use statistical analysis to establish representative background noise levels and observations of the ambient soundscape.
- 1.8. Typically, this requires continual monitoring for 15 minute periods over a minimum of a 7 day period to be able to capture sufficient data to understand and manage the associated uncertainties so that any derived background noise levels and ambient soundscape observations can be confidently relied upon.

## SPATIAL EXTENT OF THE NOISE ASSESSMENT FOR THE SEIR

- 1.9. The district around VRG is almost exclusively residential in character with correspondingly relatively quiet background noise levels and a tranquil ambient soundscape. Noise will

therefore not decay to below background noise levels or stop being incongruous in the context of the ambient soundscape until it has travelled some distance from the VRG.

- 1.10. Consequently, intensification of existing and introduction of more noise generating activities at the VRG has potential to cause disturbance and disruption to not only residents of properties adjacent to the VRG but also those some distance from the premises.
- 1.11. It is therefore suggested that the spatial extent of the noise assessment should be carefully considered and a distance of 750 feet from the boundary of the VRG is considered a likely minimum.

## SOURCES OF NOISE

- 1.12. The main sources of noise associated with the proposed changes to the use of VRG that should be included in the SEIR include the following:
- Amplified music and speech
  - Crowds
  - Traffic
  - Miscellaneous e.g. temporary plant installations such a generators or refrigeration equipment for catering, and fireworks.

## NOISE PREDICTIONS

- 1.13. Assessment of the noise from the proposed increased use of the VRG will be dependent on theoretical prediction of noise propagation.
- 1.14. There are several methods of predicting the propagation of noise e.g. ISO 9613 is a common method.
- 1.15. Whatever method is used to predict noise levels from the VRG it should include the following parameters that influence the propagation of noise
- Robust source levels i.e. the sound power and frequency spectrum of the source should be realistic and verifiable.
  - The effect of distance (geometric spreading).

- Source directivity characteristics.
- Source emission characteristics e.g. some Public Address system (PAs) propagate as a line source at a lower rate of decay before the decay increases to that of a point source at a faster rate.
- The effects of topography and buildings acting as barriers to the propagation of noise
- Ground absorption.
- Air absorption.
- Relative humidity and temperature.
- Meteorological conditions e.g. wind direction.
- Acoustic reflections other than from the ground.

## NOISE PREDICTION VERIFICATION

- 1.16. Whilst the prediction of the noise from VRG will be a starting point in the noise assessment for the SEIR, there will be the opportunity to verify the predictions from amplified sound by installing a temporary PA at the VGR and carrying out noise propagation tests.
- 1.17. Such a test would involve temporary installation of a PA configured in a way typical of likely an event at VGR and playing test examples of sound at various levels, whilst simultaneously measuring at a reference point at the VRG e.g. the sound mixing/control point at VRG, and at representative residential locations at various distances around the VRG.
- 1.18. The propagation test would provide real world empirical data directly relevant to the VRG and surrounding locations that could be used to verify the noise predictions and reduce the inevitable uncertainties associated with theoretical prediction of noise propagation so that, they could be more confidently relied upon in the noise assessment in the SEIR.

## SUMMARY

- 1.19. Noise from the proposed changes and intensification of use of the VGR has the potential to cause significant adverse effects to people living at and using residential properties adjacent to and some distance from the VGR.



- 1.20. As well as considering regulatory requirements, the assessment of the noise in the SEIR from the proposed changes at VGR should include a comprehensive baseline noise survey to establish representative background noise levels and ambient sound conditions in outdoor amenity spaces at residential properties adjacent too, and to at least 750 feet from, the perimeter of the VGR.
- 1.21. The assessment of the impact of noise from the VGR should include evaluation against regulatory requirements, and of the difference between the noise from VGR and baseline noise, the increase in noise levels compared to existing conditions, allow for any acoustic characteristics that might enhance the impact of the noise, and evaluate how congruous the noise will be with the existing soundscape.
- 1.22. The sources of noise included in the SEIR assessment should include all those likely to be audible beyond the boundary of the VGR.
- 1.23. The prediction of the propagation of noise from sources at the VGR should be based on reliable source data and include relevant factors that influence propagation of noise outdoors.
- 1.24. Predictions of amplified noise should be verified by a propagation test using a temporarily installed PA and simultaneous measurements at the VGR and various representative residential properties adjacent to and at multiple distances from the premises.

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## **VANGUARDIA LIMITED**

### **LONDON OFFICE**

The Ministry  
79-81 Borough Road  
London SE1 1DN

### **MANCHESTER OFFICE**

Jactin House  
24 Hood Street  
Manchester M4 6WX

### **HEAD OFFICE**

21 Station Road West, Oxted  
Surrey RH8 9EE

Tel +44 (0) 1883 718690

office@vanguardia.co.uk  
**vanguardia.co.uk**

**Subject: Virginia Robinson Gardens**

Dear Ms. Chien:

We, the undersigned, are writing to voice our objections to LA County's suggested modifications to the schedule of operations at Robinson Gardens.

These proposed changes will essentially render the Gardens into a commercial venue, and will completely ruin the fabric of our peaceful residential neighborhood.

The hours of operation as they stand now are way too excessive. Adding more hours is totally unreasonable and unacceptable. Whenever there's an event at the Gardens my driveways get blocked. I can't get in and out of my house, not to mention the dangers posed to our health and safety as emergency vehicles cannot reach us in a timely manner.

We would very much appreciate your understanding of our complaints.

Respectfully:

dar Mahboubi

Mahie Mahboubi

Jonathan Mahboubi

Rebecca Mahboubi

## Virginia Robinson Gardens

JODI STINE [REDACTED] >

Mon 8/22/2022 9:58 PM

To: Chloe Chen <cchen@beverlyhills.org>; City Clerk

<CityClerk@beverlyhills.org>; jchien@parks.lacounty.gov <jchien@parks.lacounty.gov>

Cc: shelia@bos.lacounty.gov <shelia@bos.lacounty.gov>

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I have already written and sent you an email concerning my OPPOSITION to the expansion of the Robinson Gardens hours and events. **I am a member of the Friends of Robinson Gardens and I OPPOSE these changes.**

However, as a member of the non-profit Friends of Robinson Gardens, I received **the email below (From Betty Goldstein -President) urging its members to write letters to the County and City with specific instructions of what to say.**

I wanted to bring this to your attention as it's very disconcerting that her letter is misleading and not accurate. The letter is meant to solicit letters from members in support of all the proposed changes to the operating covenants of The Robinson Gardens. However, the letter inaccurately states that the concerned neighbors are, "Those who oppose the Gardens and want to curtail its operations". **This is untrue and misleading. All of the neighbors support the Gardens and are only trying to limit its impact on the livability of our neighborhood.** These are substantial proposed changes (Increased operating hours and visitor counts as well as a 500% increase in the number of parties held each year). **In all of our meetings with the County and The Friends of Robinson Gardens group, we have not heard a single plan to curtail traffic, trash, noise or other disruptions to our residential neighborhood.**

Betty's letter actually asserts the ultimate plan of the Robinson Gardens is to be "Less dependent on taxpayer dollars" by hosting more parties at the garden! **She goes on to say, "This is standard operation for County Gardens and City facilities such as LACMA, The Wallis, Descanso Gardens"!!** This is disturbing to equate a 6 acre, former private home, at the end of a residential cul-de-sac, with these high traffic commercial operations. By way of example, Descanso Gardens is on 150 acres and LACMA and The Wallis are clearly in very busy commercial districts.

The City of Beverly Hills General Plan specifically states that the areas north of Santa Monica Blvd., with the exception of The Beverly Hills Hotel, shall be residential only and specifically non-commercial. **Friends of Robinson Gardens clearly intends to use this public garden for commercial purposes.**

We Respectfully urge and implore you to not increase the allotted number of functions at the Robinson Gardens.

Sincerely,

Jodi and Don Stine

██████ Cove Way

Beverly Hills, CA

**Note: Email from the president of the VRG sent August 22, 2022**

Dear Members -

This is **URGENT**. The City Council of Beverly Hills has scheduled a hearing on the proposed SEIR for Tuesday night.

We need to show our support for the changes to the City Council as soon as possible!

We did not receive notification of the meeting in advance, so were unable to prepare.

If you have already sent a letter to the County, you may use the same letter **readdressed** to the City Council of Beverly Hills and send as soon as possible to:

**Email:** [cityclerk@beverlyhills.org](mailto:cityclerk@beverlyhills.org)

*If you can read a short version of your letter at the meeting (3 minutes or less), please attend by Zoom at this address. The meeting starts at 7.*

**- Video (during public comment only):** <http://beverlyhills.org/comment>

Thank you again for helping. Those who oppose the Gardens and would like to curtail operations are well organized and very active. We need to show the City and County how strong the support for Virginia Robinson Gardens really is and how important the changes will be to the work done there.

**If you haven't already written, please take a moment now.**

**Would you please help by writing a short letter (or email) stating your support and mentioning a few of the points listed below?**

Your letter to the County should be sent either by snail mail to:

Ms. Jui Ing Chien, Park Planner

County of LA Department of Parks & Recreation

[1000 S. Fremont Ave., Unit #40 A-9](#) West, 3rd Floor

Alhambra, CA 91083

or by email to: [jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Any questions can be directed to the County at (626) 588-5317

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Virginia Robinson Gardens!

Betty Goldstein  
President

Friends of Robinson Gardens

[1008 Elden Way](#)

[Beverly Hills, CA 90210](#)

310.550.2068

[www.robinsongardens.org](http://www.robinsongardens.org)

On Facebook @ [Robinson Gardens](#)

The letter below is not the actual letter to send, it is a list of reasons you support the project. Please choose a couple and use them in your support letter.

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors: (or a variation)

OR

Dear Beverly Hills City Council: (**Email:** [cityclerk@beverlyhills.org](mailto:cityclerk@beverlyhills.org))

I am writing in support of the modification of the hours, days and number of special use events at Virginia Robinson Gardens. The change in operations at the Virginia Robinson Gardens will create new public benefits and further the Mission of the Gardens:

1. Allowing the Gardens to be open from 9:30am to Sunset seven days a week gives the public it serves greater access
2. Will give the renowned science education program & tours for local and Title One school children more flexibility to attend and allow the program to reach more children
3. Allow more adult education classes promoting environmental sustainability and lectures to be offered to the public
4. More days and hours open benefit the public by making it accessible to families on weekends and after work
5. Making the Gardens available for private rental on a limited basis helps the Gardens to be less dependent on taxpayer dollars. This is a standard operation for County and City facilities such as LACMA, The Wallis, Descanso Gardens and other parks and gardens, etc.
6. Give the public more access to an amazing national registry landmark/museum that celebrates an important aspect of the history of Beverly Hills

Sincerely,

*Signature*

**Please include your street name so the Supervisors will know you live in the county if sending your letter to the county.**

--

Sent from Gmail Mobile



## Staff Report on LA County Draft Supplemental Environmental Report for the Robinson Gardens

Chuck Alpert [REDACTED]

Tue 8/16/2022 2:58 PM

To: Timmi Tway <ttway@beverlyhills.org>

Cc: Chloe Chen <cchen@beverlyhills.org>; City Clerk <CityClerk@beverlyhills.org>

**CAUTION: External Sender**

Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments

Please find the following communication to the City Council for inclusion with the staff report on the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) for proposed operational changes for the Robinson Gardens ("Gardens") scheduled for the City Council Study Session on August 23, 2022. Thank you.

Honorable Vice Mayor Gold and Members of the City Council

I am writing to as an individual and as an adjacent neighbor of the Virginia Robinson Gardens (the "Gardens"). I have been a neighbor of the Gardens for more than 20 years.

I greatly value the Gardens, particularly as an educational resource. **Ironically, the nearby neighbors of the Gardens, like myself, appear to be the only ones wanting to preserve the Gardens, whereas the County and the Friends of the Gardens give every appearance of wanting to forever change the character of the Gardens, our surrounding neighborhood and the northern part of Beverly Hills.**

The best way to explain my concern is to look at some of the key proposed changes to the Gardens' operations and to evaluate fairly their impact on our neighborhood and on our city

- *The County wants to double the daily attendance to 200, open 365 days/year, and stay open every day until sunset.*

Going to a potential 200 visitors every day of the year plus staff and volunteers means a potential of nearly 80,000 visitors/staff or 40,000 vehicles a year. All these cars will traverse Eldon Way, Crescent Drive, seven-days a week. One has to ask why not stay within currently daily limits and hours?

- *The County wants to increase special events from 4 per year for fundraising to 24 per year (4/month) to include weddings, private birthday events, and any event the County approves*

Maximum capacity for a special event at the Gardens is 860 plus staffing for approximately 1000 people. That limit means a potential additional 24,000 party guests and 12,000 vehicles or more. These events, by their nature, will involve, most likely, amplified music, catering, alcohol, lights, tents, mobilization and demobilization. In effect, the Gardens will become a large scale catering venue nearly every other week. Recall, the Virginia Robinson Bequest donated the Gardens to the County for public use as a "botanical gardens and a museum" not as a catering venue.

- *The Gardens has at best 35 parking spaces on site and more realistically no more than 25 parking spaces.*

How do you park 100 cars in 25 spaces each day? In 35 spaces? How do you park 500 cars in 25 or even 35 spaces? The answer you park those cars on the streets in our neighborhood. On the Gardens' website, it states: "if you cannot park in the Gardens parking lot, park on Crescent Way and walk to the

Gardens.” The County says they will use valet parking for special events, but the valet parks the cars on our streets multiplying the traffic impact. They say they will use offsite parking, but the DSEIR names not a single possible offsite parking location.

- *The County says traffic and parking represent a significant impact but they do not intend to modify the project or mitigate the risk.*

A host of project mitigation are possible. The most logical mitigation is to retain the current operational limitations which requires compliance with city ordinances and avoidance of overlapping events with neighbors. The proposed changes will eliminate these compliance requirements. Increasing special events from four to five per year and limit those events to direct fundraising activities would also mitigate the impact and respond to the County's rationale for changes.

- *The County claims it needs to the changes to increase the Title I school program at the Gardens.*

That program is very modest currently. It does not occur every day during the school year or even every week. The County has run the Gardens since 1977, but according to the website only about 5% of their programming is for kids. They have had every opportunity to increase the program in 40+ years of operation. The program can easily increase by extending the hours and days of the program within existing operating hours.

- *The County says they want to make the Gardens available to everyone; they are promoting inclusivity and diversity. The Environmental Reports says the changes will provide needed revenue.*

The County has never demonstrated the financial need. At a meeting with neighbors at the end of last year, a county representative assured everyone the County did not need additional revenue to operate the Gardens.

The County fails to demonstrate that people who want to come are somehow blocked from coming. Eighty open reservations are available apparently on an average day. The proposed changes will not alter limited existing public transportation to facilitate visitors' attendance. In truth, the County wants to change the character of Gardens, turn it into a park, a catering venue, a performance center, a movie screening location – everything but a “botanical garden and museum.”

As I began, the neighbors are the only ones who want to truly preserve the Gardens. I ask for your help to preserve the Gardens. To that end, I ask Council take the following actions:

- Direct the City Attorney to evaluate and report to Council on the legal implication of using the Gardens as a catering venue, private wedding venue, private party venue or any other event the County approves in relation to the terms of the Virginia Robinson Bequest.
- Negotiate with the County for a transfer of stewardship of the Gardens to the City.
- Direct Staff to submit comments to the County by September 5<sup>th</sup> and to appear and also make a verbal and written statement at any County Board of Supervisor meeting related to the proposed operational changes for the Gardens. Those comments and statements should include, but are not limited to, the following points:
  - An expression that the impacts of the proposed changes, particularly traffic, parking, noise, and emergency services are significant requiring appropriate mitigation.
  - An expression that existing operational limits, or the No Action Alternative, reflect the appropriate mitigation of all impacts.

- An expression that City has authority to implement and enforce parking limitations on streets nearby to the Gardens
- An expression that the City has authority to regulate valet parking including the authority to condition such authority on the use of offsite parking for any event at the Gardens.
- An expression that the City supports the use of the Gardens as a botanical garden and museum, but not for any other use such as a wedding reception venue, a performance center or any commercial purpose
- An expression that City emergency response has inherent access limitations to responding to the Gardens during an emergency.
- An expression that any special event and any event at the Gardens should secure all applicable City authorizations and permits.
- An expression that the proposed changes may well alter forever the existing character and beneficial value of the Gardens.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Alpert

August 15, 2022

Via EMAIL

Jui Ing Chien  
Park Planner  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
[jChien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jChien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Re: Comments on Proposed Operational Change of the Virginia Robinson Garden

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Virginia Robinson Garden is located at the end of Cul de sac in the completely dead- end residential area. I live next to the Garden thus I am familiar with the situations how the operation of Garden affects daily lives of neighbors. With the philanthropic heart and mind, the late Mrs. Robinson donated her lifetime residence to the County government wishing that it will benefit public for education. Thus the bequest agreement specifically states that, in short, "it will be an **arboretum** garden for educational purpose; **no business for profit** shall ever be conducted on said property; and will be available for public **at reasonable times**." County officials and Beverly Hills City officials signed.

The County has already breached the original donor agreement by conducting fundraising events and opening events for the Friends of Robinson Garden like a social club since 2014 with their expanded operational activities. Now 2021 proposal is to abolish the donor agreement completely.

Here are my short statements about the how the new 2021 proposal is in breach of the original donor agreement.

- (1) For Arboretum use requirement. The original donor agreement specifically states that the estate will be used as arboretum for educational purpose. The donor wished and made it clear that the estate will be open to public for educational purpose only. Here the public for the education purpose means scientists, researchers, and students for research, study and for education. The donor never intended the estate home will be later used for weddings and commercial events by the County government. It is outright overriding the donor's purpose.
- (2) No Business Activities requirement. Secondly, the Friends of Robinson Garden ("Friends Group") runs the Garden, mostly for their social activities unrelated to the purpose of arboretum and for its education. Under the donor agreements, there was a specific funds were set aside for maintenance purposes. If the County government

is unable to sustain to maintain the property solely for the purpose of education, it should first inspect the operational books and accounting to know how it is depleted and made it public upon request. Nonetheless, if the County is unable to self-sustain any further, the estate should be given to the beneficiary next in line, or find other ways without breaching the agreement, without the turning the estate into the commercial event place in the residential area.

- (3) At the Reasonable Time requirement. Thirdly, the 2021 proposal of 7 days week and dawn to dusk is clearly not at the reasonable time for the proposed educational purpose.

The expansion of Garden operation made in 2014 was made for the purposes to provide more garden tours to the public and to include for fundraising activities which mostly unrelated to the arboretum study and education. This expanded operation created harms already at the cost of neighbors' sacrifices. Now the 2021 Proposal is proposing further expansion.

In addition to the increased traffic to the neighbor and neighboring communities and the adjacent cities, here are some examples of unreasonableness effect that will bring into the close neighbors:

Fire. During this unprecedented drought situation in the southern California which will get worse and worse due to environmental issue, the risks of large public gatherings that will bring into this Cul du sac area is simply unreasonable.

Crime. People loiter around the street for waiting their garden appointment. With this increased and massive gathering, the neighbors are exposed to the strangers who may be in presence without purpose or with wrong purpose. Even now, whenever strangers wander the streets, we must worry if they are for the Garden visit or for something else. Even though the city ambassador tells us to notify for any strangers, how do we know until things happened? My house already had intrusions twice in recent years. I notified about the intrusion to the Garden superintendent, and they installed 40 some CCTV cameras newly. With masks on in this era, CCTVs do not really help. The more unspecified public have access in the residential neighbor, it will bring more crimes in the area and we have no prevention.

Noise Traffic, Chaotic environment. Whenever there is an event at the Garden the days before and after, the catering and equipment trucks occupy the Cul de sac, dead-end street. The routine trash collecting trucks, gardeners' trucks, pool man's maintenance trucks, construction trucks, and delivery vans fight for space making backing noises all the time. At night we hear loud music sound from the Garden and some other houses.



Emergency. When the dead-end street and neighboring streets are blocked by visitors and tourists, and their vehicles, the emergency cars have difficulty to access, and our lives are at danger. If Fire erupts, it will bring out unthinkable results.

There are so many urgent issues in the L.A. County, most importantly the issues like exponentially growing number of homelessness, issues with low-income housing, unequal medical access, gun-control, unmaintained streets, etc. and where the crimes and vandalisms are soaring all over, how L.A. County propose this idea in the name of public benefits. I urge government be reasonable and put resources to make each and every neighbor within the County better and safer place, not the other way around.

I wish to guess that the proposal was planned based on naïve idea without knowing the facts and effects. I worry if it was planned by influence of someone who is privileged enough to afford the cost of all the caterings from outside caterer, valet parking services, and all to have their family members to have luxurious weddings and bar or bat Mitzvah kind of events. The proposed change will only serve those who want more experience that others can't afford, and the existing luxurious hotels and country clubs that exist for that purpose are not enough.

The estate is located in the residential dead-end fire zone area. Please find a way to make the property to be used by less number of people only for the academic studies, and educational purposes in order keep the integrity of the estate and its special garden. Please keep the terms of donor agreement, without breaching the zoning rules, without breaching the heart of neighbors.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Kim', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Robin Kim

██████ Iden Way

Ms. Jui Ing Chien  
Park Planner  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
1000 S. Fremont Ave.  
Unit #40 A-9 West, 3rd Floor  
Alhambra, CA 91083

Dear Ms. Chien,

We believe there are many deficiencies in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR), including traffic, parking, water, safety, but the purpose of this letter is to alert the County to one huge deficiency – the discussion of Fire Hazards and Emergency response.

### **FIRES**

The neighborhood around the Virginia Robinson Gardens (the Gardens) has recently been declared an Extreme Fire Hazard Area, and many residents of the area had their home and property insurance raised significantly or canceled completely.

Yet, the Draft SEIR glosses over this important issue. Specifically, the DSEIR states:

**“3.21.1 There has not been a wildland fire of any significance in Beverly Hills, and the last large wildland fire adjacent to the city occurred in Franklin Canyon more than 50 years ago”**

This is inaccurate.

The DSEIR fails to discuss the Bel-Air Fire of 1961. Bel Air is just a few miles west of Beverly Hills. The Bel Air Fire was a disaster that began as a construction debris fire on November 6, 1961 in the Bel Air Community of Los Angeles. The fire destroyed 484 homes and burned 6,090 acres. At least 200 firemen were injured. This fire moved so quickly and burned so out of control that children were at The John Thomas Dye school that day and then evacuated by noon. By that evening, The John Thomas Dye School had burned to the ground. Much of the difficulty in fighting that fire came from the narrow streets and limited access in Bel Air.

The DSEIR also fails to discuss the Getty Fire of 2019 which burned 745 acres in Los Angeles. Thousands of people were evacuated during this fire and schools were closed. 10 homes were destroyed, and 15 residences were damaged.

Wildfire is a real hazard for Beverly Hills. The Gardens are particularly prone to fire for several reasons. There is a palm grove and palm trees are notorious for sending embers once ignited. Also, more importantly, access to the Gardens is very limited.

### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

The DSEIR failed to discuss the important fact that Beverly Hills Fire Department vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances and rescue vehicles) do not have access to the Garden property. First responders can only access the Garden on foot. A building overhang on the property blocks access to the property by rescue and emergency vehicles. because of the overhang in the parking lot, no fire trucks or emergency vehicles can access the property.

Note, the six-acre property is undulated, and some areas have limited, uneven pathways compounding an emergency response. This limitation has the potential to delay a critical rescue as well as delay transport to hospital facilities especially when rescue personnel have access limitations.

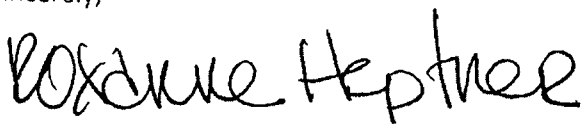
The fire risk at the Gardens presents another unique concern. According to the County staff a pressurized fire hydrant exists in the front of the Gardens' grounds. The City Fire Marshall, however, failed to indicate knowledge of this hydrant. In the event of a serious fire, however, additional fire hydrants may be needed. Any backup hydrant would need to extend considerable distances, possibly even from Carolyn Way, Cove, and/or Crescent. The nearest fire hydrant appears to be at 1017 Crescent Drive, a considerable distance from the entrance to the Gardens. This fact will again complicate and delay any response to a fire emergency at the Gardens, perhaps even threaten historic features of the property and potentially spread fire to nearby residences. Any concern for the safety of visitors and staff compels rules and operational procedures which account for the safety limitations of the property. The DSEIR fails to address this critical concern.

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Special Events will require set up on the property, since there is no kitchen or catering facilities. The DSEIR also talks about setting up additional lighting and sound systems. Not only will these require many people entering the Gardens to set up and take down, in addition to the attendees at the Special Events, but there is also a known risk that catering facilities, lighting and sound systems malfunction and present a new threat of fire.

As residents of Beverly Hills, we believe that the risk of Fire and Emergency is a critical adverse impact which the County DSEIR has completely ignored.

Sincerely,



Roxanne Heptner

█ Cove Way

Beverly Hills, CA 90210



Dear City Council Members,

I reviewed the Grant Deed and the 2014 agreement and compared them to what I saw on the Virginia Gardens website (<https://www.robinsongardens.org>). There are many instances of commercialization and other use violations.

It is my position that the recent uses for the Gardens do not abide by the stipulations made in the Grant Deed or the 2014 agreement. In fact, it appears that the 2014 Agreement allows for uses in contradiction to the Grant Deed.

For example, the 2014 agreement allows for commercial filming, yet in the Grant Deed Pg 2 #4 *"no business for profit should ever be conducted on said property."*

If you look through the website, and the monthly newsletters tab from January 2021- November 2021, some themes emerge.

- 1- Very little attention is given to the underserved children component of the Gardens. I could only find one picture
- 2- A plethora of pictures are available of fancy luncheons, book clubs, and other such events referencing very high-end food, champagne, etc. in a very product placement type manner
- 3- Numerous mentions of vendors and the selling of items. Including a very telling quote of an "unexpected donation" from the proceeds of an on-site book signing.
- 4- The Gardens were to be for the *"benefit and enjoyment of the general public as an arboretum garden"* (Grant Deed #4). There are multiple references to private, member only events.

The Gardens does offer educational opportunities to children- the site mentioned serving 2000 children a year- or 20 days worth if you factor in their max attendance of 100 per day, and did offer a remote program that seemed to serve 3000-4000 children. What happens the other 345 days a year?

However, this is dwarfed by what appears to be essentially a country club for the benefit of the Friends and their friends. There are numerous events that appear to have nothing to do with the terms of the Grant Deed nor the 2014 agreement. And the website routinely promotes high end designers, restaurants, jewelry vendors, perfume vendors, etc. There are a large amount of references to high end food such as Spagos, Cartier champagne, etc. The site is awash with photos that look as if they are taken from high society magazines.

## **Children Education**

Tours are limited to Monday – Friday 10 am – 12:30 pm and the website says they served 2000 children this way. They also started a remote program that is said to have served 3000-4000 students.

They appear to have one annual Science Fair in the spring.

Please note the limited times here of 2 ½ hours during weekdays, versus the virtually wide-open calendar for the wide-ranging events the Friends attend.

# Children's Onsite Program

Virginia Robinson Gardens (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) offers a fun, interactive science-based learning experience for elementary school students, grades 3-5. Children will learn by finding, identifying, tasting and smelling plants they discover in one of our six botanical gardens. They will then have an opportunity to examine these plant species under a microscope and learn how to cultivate and nurture these plants in a garden of their very own.

Our program complements the California State guidelines for science education, and field trips to the Robinson Gardens have been approved by the Los Angeles Unified School District. The goal of the program is to increase children's knowledge about botany, ecology and conservation, as well as motivate kids to eat healthier foods by teaching them where their food comes from and how it's grown in nature.

Student field trips are led by trained docents who are able to foster a child's curiosity and are able to provide an exciting, exploratory learning experience. We are able to accommodate up to 42 students with 4 adult chaperones. Tours are offered Monday through Friday from 10:00AM to 12:30PM with an advanced reservation. Admission is free for qualified private and public schools and transportation is available for qualifying Title 1 schools. The tour concludes with a souvenir for each student: a gift bag and a seedling that they will have planted.

Advance reservations are required for all field trips (we commonly book a school-year ahead!). If you are interested in having your child's class visit Virginia Robinson Gardens, please have your school contact April Walton at [awalton@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:awalton@parks.lacounty.gov) or 310-550-2040.

**Due to COVID-19, on-site school programs are currently pending.**

- Virginia Robinson Gardens is listed as an approved field trip for the Los Angeles Unified School District for grades 3-5.
- Admission is free for qualified private and public school organized field trips.
- Transportation is available, and free if school qualifies as Title 1.
- Advanced reservations are necessary with a short application to complete.
- Docent led tours for children are available throughout the year.
- Tours are offered Monday through Friday from 10:30am to 12:30pm.

Following Virginia Robinson's legacy of serving children of the community, the Friends had a Children's Science Program, bringing over 2,000 schoolchildren from the 2nd to the 4th grades to the Gardens for docent-led children's science tours each year. These tours covered topics such as photosynthesis, pollination, composting, the difference between fruits and vegetables, and many more science-based topics.

4

## The Children's Science Fair



Our annual, spring Science Fair brings young people from local residential treatment programs to the gardens for a fun day of exploration and learning. It is a day that celebrates the earth and demonstrates support for environmental awareness through discussions on water conservation, recycling, saving energy and food sources. The children, ages 6-16, tour the grounds, venturing into the gourmet garden and visiting the chickens in our very own *Poulet Palace*. They take a stroll down to the Wildlife Pond and journey through the largest collection of King Palms in North America. All the while, they are learning about the environment and their part in protecting the earth and making it a better place.

Following the tour, the kids are invited to a healthy lunch and a Science Show. As they depart, each child is given a backpack full of school supplies and will leave with a skip in their step having spent the day surrounded by nature.

For more information about the annual Children's Science Fair, please contact April Walton (310) 550-2087 or [awalton@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:awalton@parks.lacounty.gov)

## Special Events

While some events may be in line with the 2014 agreement, they certainly do not appear to be in line with the Grant Deed. And despite being closed to the public for May and September, the Friends have events during these months for themselves, also in violation of the terms of the Grant Deed dictating that the Gardens be open to the Public. In the monthly spotlights, they interview a different member each month- few mention the children educational aspect, many mention the fabulous parties. Also, some events are for "members only" – i.e., not open the public.

From the Grant Deed

Pg 2. #1

*“the said property...shall be held and used...for the purpose of an arboretum or botanic garden and for no other purpose inconsistent with said use”*

2014 Agreement- classes are supposed to be about *“how well they interpret the historical collections at the facility”*

#### 4.05.04 Type of Events

Public programs to conform to new day/hours and number of participants allowed; however, subject matter for seminar/classes to be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent based on how well the classes interpret the historical collections at the facility. Also to include tours of the grounds for biology, botany, and horticulture groups.

Some examples from their website:

#### **“Educational” Events**

- High end art collecting “how to invest wisely in art”

#### Mumsey Nemiroff Discusses Fakes, Frauds and Forgeries in the Art World at the Virginia Robinson Gardens



The Virginia Robinson Gardens played host this past month to an intimate salon featuring guest speaker Mumsey Nemiroff. An experienced lecturer, having taught at UCLA for two decades on the subject of art connoisseurship, Mumsey recently spent a particularly gorgeous November morning illuminating just over two dozen Friends and their friends about the art of collecting.

“Understand what you’re buying,” she advises. “Buyer beware, always.”

In spotting a fake, Mumsey has identified six criteria to help collectors successfully procure genuine art: age, condition, rarity, aesthetic, provenance, and price. “Always beware of the words unique and rare,” she cautions.

[...Read More](#)



But at the center of the event was how to wisely invest one's money in art. And for those in attendance, including President Betty Goldstein and past Presidents Kerstin Royce and Patti Reinstein, Mumsey's talk proved incredibly informative about what to look for when purchasing genuine art and antiques.

- **Gingerbread House Decorating**

Participants were provided with a gorgeous, pre-assembled gingerbread house made by local bakery Tutto Bene; royal icing; figurines of trees, sleighs, Santa, snowmen, and more for their gingerbread house gardens; and deluxe candy kits (based on their pre-reserved color palette). The heart of the event was the hour-long decorating lesson by Della Gossett, Spago's Executive Pastry Chef. Everything from her tutorial on piping the royal icing (which dries faster than you can believe) to best practices for applying the candy, gave guests professional insight into making a great house. Additionally, Chef Della interspersed fun gingerbread house trivia (did you know Queen Victoria's wedding cake used royal icing which set a new standard for wedding cakes, and weighed over 300 pounds?!). Della truly was an excellent teacher and made the morning very special.

- **Art classes taught by world famous artists**

**4. Please add any additional information you would like to share!**

For me, the greatest gift from the Gardens is the opportunity to study botanical illustration. I knew nothing about it but found that it was taught in such a way that even your first piece was pleasant to look at -- not botanically correct, but pretty. Well, now after only 14 years or so, I am starting to feel somewhat capable of producing something decent. I encourage anyone who would like to try it to join one of our classes taught by famous artists from all over the world and see what you can do! You might be as surprised as I was!

- **Learn about Restaurants**

Eloquent and dapper as ever, Geary, the former pastry chef and best-selling author, charmed us during his second engagement at the Gardens by helping us to remember those restaurants that formed our first experiences as children and the ones that became our favorite haunts in our adult years. We learned about the origins of legendary Southern California restaurants, which ones have survived and how they have changed with the times. There were a bevy of questions, a clear indication of a successful talk and an enraptured audience.

## **Private Events**

Despite the Grant Deed stipulating that the Gardens be accessible by the public, there are numerous "member only" events.

Pg 2 #4

*"shall at all reasonable times be open and available for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public as an abortetum garden"*

Our new book club, Tea, Scones & Reading Group, has had its first meeting at the Gardens. The book club is open to new members and will be held quarterly. Announcements will be sent in plenty of time for you to read the book. Books are chosen with relevance to the Robinson family and their estate.

schools. Garden Tour co-chair Jeanne Anderson talked about the upcoming, not to be missed, very special members-only Garden Tour on October 23. Education chair Clare Wagner spoke about some very exciting events and lectures, including an upcoming presentation by interior designer extraordinaire Timothy Corrigan. Membership chair Natalie Gordon mentioned the annual Gingerbread House Decorating event that her committee sponsors and talked about opportunities to volunteer for her committee as did the Newsletter editor Linda Meadows.



## Not Open to the Public

The website states that the Gardens are closed to the public for the months of May and September, but they are allowing private member events to occur during those times.

Book Club event from September 2021

We would love for you to join us for our Education Lecture Series and our book club. The book club is open to a small number of guests; please contact the office if you are interested in attending. Because of limited space for our lecture series, we invite our membership to attend, so please consider becoming a [Society Member](#).

## Commercial Uses have been Occurring

Multiple references to vendors, boutiques and items “available for purchase”. Not all of the proceeds go to the Garden. I saw a 20% donation of proceeds referenced as well as the Friends being grateful for the “totally unexpected” donation of all of the proceeds from a book signing. The Friends appear to be allowing commercial activities on the site while taking a “cut”. And they also allow commercial filming to occur onsite for a fee.

From the Grant Deed,



Pg 2 #4 *"no business for profit should ever be conducted on said property"*

- This appears to have been violated by the October 23, 2021 shopping event where there were numerous vendors and according to the website 20% of the proceeds were donated. I.E., not 100%- the vendors appear to have "conducted business" on the property

### Vendor Sales onsite

Wonderfully curated by Dana, the boutiques around the pool and in the Pool Pavilion displayed enticing and popular items for sale from fabulous clothing and jewelry to shoes, colorful tablecloths, and bags. The attendees shopped happily, and 20% of the sale proceeds were donated to the Gardens.

It was Roses, Roses, Roses, in a rainbow of beautiful colors available in bouquets for purchase from Rose Lane Farms. On the tennis court, an enthusiastic group of "gardeners" were having a difficult time deciding which of the rose bushes they wanted to purchase. Also spotlighted was Virginia Robinson's favorite rose -- the beautiful and fragrant pink Eiffel Tower.



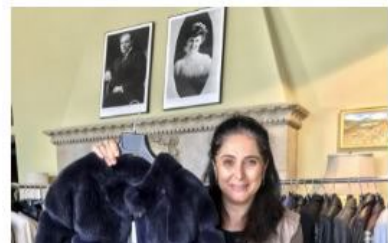
How do I become a retail vendor, room designer, or floral designer for your Annual Garden Tour?

The Annual Garden Tour is held every year on the third Saturday in May from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The event showcases five grand private gardens on the Westside in addition to a festive decorated Robinson home located on a six-acre garden oasis in the heart of Beverly Hills. At the fabled Virginia Robinson Gardens, a lovely luncheon is served all day long and local vendors feature their wares in a chic boutique. Mrs. Robinson's historic home is open and decorated by remarkable floral and room designers expressing each year's theme. Guests are invited to enjoy floral design demonstrations, an opportunity drawing, as well as shopping in the unique boutiques made available at the estate that day. Proceeds from the Benefit Garden Tour help preserve the Virginia Robinson Gardens as well as allow the Friends of Robinson Gardens to provide ongoing community education and outreach programs.



Sunday, seated nearby, was busy greeting family and friends, both old and new, and signing copies of her book. Sunday graciously donated the proceeds from the sale of all books purchased at the Tea to the Friends. When asked about her donation, Sunday replied, "I loved the event! And so many people have been contacting me about how much they enjoyed it. I want to donate the proceeds from the sale of the books in gratitude to FRG for giving me such a special and meaningful event." We are deeply grateful to Sunday for her totally unexpected and very generous donation.



## Commercial Photoshoots

The Virginia Robinson Gardens & Estate is available for both commercial and non-commercial still photography shoots. Located in the heart of Beverly Hills, this lush, 6.2-acre estate, made up of six diverse gardens and unique, historical architecture, provides a dynamic backdrop to any photoshoot. Commercial and non-commercial photoshoots are available for a scheduled fee, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm - including set up and breakdown time.

To inquire about booking a commercial or non-commercial photoshoot, please email [visit@robinsongardens.org](mailto:visit@robinsongardens.org) or call (310) 550-2040.





## Already Renting out the Gardens for private events?

The Website says that they cannot host the below:

Can I have my wedding at the Virginia Robinson Gardens?	—
Unfortunately we are prohibited from hosting weddings, religious events, or political events.	

But if that is the case, then what events is this referring to?

## Event Prices

Events are priced individually depending upon the number of attendees, the location(s) within Robinson Gardens, the amount of set-up that is required for an event, and other factors.

### Included in the Event Package:

A limited selection of tables and chairs are available for up to 100 people, linens for up to 50 people. Includes 72" round tables that sit 10 people comfortably, white folding chairs, sun umbrellas, use of electrical outlets for lighting and sound, catering kitchen, restroom facilities, and the use of dumpsters on the property.

Limited parking: 25 spaces are available in the parking lot by the Pool Pavilion (Note that catering and rental companies also need to park in this lot and will reduce the number of spaces available for guest parking). If more than 25 spaces are needed, options are (1) Uber/Lyft/taxi, (2) park on Crescent (a nearby street) and walk up to VRG, or (3) valet parking. Parking on Elden Way is not allowed due to neighborhood restrictions.

*\*Caterers must stay throughout the event and be responsible for clean-up after the event.*

## Conclusion



The Gardens are essentially being used as a country club for the Friends. There are numerous references to donated food and beverages and I wonder if there is a quid pro quo going on for the benefit of the Friends social events in exchange for visibility on the website.

While they do offer educational opportunities for underserved children, this is a small percentage of its use compared to the plethora of fancy luncheons, parties, book clubs, and other social events for the benefit of its members.

It is my position that the uses violate numerous areas of the Grant Deed and that the clause citing the return to the purview of Beverly Hills has been triggered on multiple levels.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Weiss (on behalf of my client Kathy Checchi)

Honorable Vice Mayor Gold and Members of the City Council:

I am writing as one of a group of more than 35 Beverly Hills property owners who will be affected by the operational changes proposed by LA County for the Virginia Robinson Gardens.

Individually and as a group we have unanimously stated our objections to the proposed changes:

1. Traffic and parking
2. Increased noise inconsistent with a residential neighborhood
3. Fire Concerns
4. Ignoring the specific bequest of the Grantor- Mrs. Robinson

The SEIR minimizes traffic and parking, does not address noise inconsistent with existing Beverly Hills residential zoning code, dismisses fire concerns and wholly avoids the specific terms and conditions of the grantor -and in particular the clearly stated consequences of violating those terms.

It should be stated that it is only by the "accident" of the bequest that LA County has any ownership interest in this property. The mere incident of ownership, however, does not exempt the county from conforming to the land use restrictions under which all property ownerships within the City of Beverly Hills must comply.

Moreover, ownership of the property certainly and quite specifically does not exempt the County from the restrictions and conditions imposed by the Grantor. Under the terms of the deed, Mrs. Robinson left the property for as an arboretum or botanic garden and "for no other purpose inconsistent with said use." She specifically required that "No business for profit shall ever be conducted on said property but the same shall at all reasonable times be open and available for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public as an arboretum garden."

If the County violates the use restrictions, ownership of the property is to revert to the City of Beverly Hills. If Beverly Hills violates the terms and conditions the property reverts to the heirs and successors of the Grantor.

The City of Beverly Hills consistent with the desires of its residences and its own zoning code should formally notify the LA County Board of Supervisors that if it violates the Grantor 's terms of use that it will exercise its rights consistent with the Grantor's wishes and take possession of the property. Should Beverly Hills fail to do this, and the County goes ahead with its proposed change of use, it is virtually certain that Mrs. Robinson's heirs will exercise their rights to take ownership of these six acres of prime Beverly Hills residential real estate. There are no Grantor restrictions on their subsequent use of this land which is prime residential development real estate.

In other words, if the City of Beverly Hills fails to take action in this matter, any and all public use of the Gardens may ultimately be lost, and the property could revert to private ownership and development.

As neighbors, we have fully supported the Gardens and we ask the City Council to take the steps necessary to preserve this jewel in our City.

Respectfully,

Kathy Checchi



Cove Way

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

**Fwd: Robinson Gardens**

JODI STINE [REDACTED]

Wed 8/17/2022 2:06 PM

To: kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov

Cc: FDavenport@ceo.lacounty.gov &lt;FDavenport@ceo.lacounty.gov&gt;; Chloe Chen &lt;cchen@beverlyhills.org&gt;

**CAUTION: External Sender**

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Hello I m forwarding you this email as I inadvertently deleted your emails from my initial distribution list.

Kathryn I did not have your proper address.

Thank you all for your time and consideration. Jodi Stine

## Forwarded message

From: **JODI STINE** [REDACTED]

Date: Wed, Aug 17, 2022 at 10:47 PM

Subject: Robinson Gardens

To: [JChien@lacounty.gov](mailto:JChien@lacounty.gov)

CC: Donald Stine [REDACTED]

[Fesia@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:Fesia@ceo.lacounty.gov) , Kathy [REDACTED]

Sharon Messer [REDACTED]

[firstdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:firstdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov) ,  
[fourthdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:fourthdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov) , [hollyjimmitchell@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:hollyjimmitchell@bos.lacounty.gov) ,  
[kathryn@lbos.lacounty.gov](mailto:kathryn@lbos.lacounty.gov) , robin kim [REDACTED] , [sheila@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:sheila@bos.lacounty.gov)

Dear Ms. Chien:

We are writing once again to voice our OPPOSITION to expanding the number of parties being held at the Robinson Gardens Specifically, we are OPPOSED to the Robinson Gardens becoming essentially an “Airbnb” party venue for rich people.

Our family has always maintained a positive and cooperative relationship with the Robinson Gardens as we believed in helping maintain the estate

as a botanical garden. Among other things, we've donated money as well as trees and landscaping.

One example over the years, is that we were told (by Tim Lindsay) not to install bright outdoor lights so as not to disturb the owls. Now, the County is contemplating turning the Gardens into the ultimate party house, with parties every single weekend! What about the owls?

The current SEIR is yet another example of bureaucratic word salad which provides no other purpose than to fulfill a specific agenda.

This is all driven to make more money by changing the Garden's 40 year history of "OPEN AND NOTORIOUS USE" as a public garden organized to minimize its impact on the surrounding residential neighborhood.

This proposition came out of nowhere and has been fast-tracked with disregard to the input from all the surrounding homeowners.

The Virginia Robinson estate was a private home and is in the middle of a residential neighborhood. The "QUIET ENJOYMENT" of our neighborhood is a right of every homeowner in the area.

We urge and implore you to not increase the allotted number of functions at the Robinson Gardens.

Sincerely,  
Don & Jodi Stine

Sent from Gmail Mobile

Honorable Vice Mayor Gold and City Council Members,

We believe there are many deficiencies in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR), including traffic, parking, water, safety, but the purpose of this letter is to alert the City to one huge deficiency – the discussion of Fire Hazards and Emergency response.

## **FIRES**

The neighborhood around the Virginia Robinson Gardens (the Gardens) has recently been declared an Extreme Fire Hazard Area, and many residents of the area had their home and property insurance raised significantly or canceled completely.

Yet, the Draft SEIR glosses over this important issue. Specifically, the DSEIR states:

**“3.21.1 There has not been a wildland fire of any significance in Beverly Hills, and the last large wildland fire adjacent to the city occurred in Franklin Canyon more than 50 years ago”**

This is completely inaccurate.

The DSEIR fails to discuss the Bel-Air Fire of 1961. Bel Air is just a few miles west of Beverly Hills. The Bel Air Fire was a disaster that began as a construction debris fire on November 6, 1961 in the Bel Air Community of Los Angeles. The fire destroyed 484 homes and burned 6,090 acres. At least 200 firemen were injured. This fire moved so quickly and burned so out of control that children were at The John Thomas Dye school that day and then evacuated by noon. By that evening, The John Thomas Dye School had burned to the ground. Much of the difficulty in fighting that fire came from the narrow streets and limited access in Bel Air.

The DSEIR also fails to discuss the Getty Fire of 2019 which burned 745 acres in Los Angeles. Thousands of people were evacuated during this fire and schools were closed. 10 homes were destroyed, and 15 residences were damaged.

On August 15, 2022, a quarter acre fire started at 2040 N. Beverly Dr. (about one mile or less from the Gardens and grew to around one acre. The fire was contained 90 minutes after it started, according to LAFD. The fire was in medium to heavy brush and was burning uphill, authorities said. Some 85 Los Angeles County firefighters responded to the brush fire by ground and air with the help of the Beverly Hills and LA County fire departments, according to LAFD.

Wildfire is a real hazard for Beverly Hills and can't be minimized. The Gardens are particularly prone to fire for several reasons. There is a palm grove and palm trees are notorious for sending embers once ignited. The limitation on watering in the current drought. Most importantly, access to the Gardens is very limited.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

The DSEIR failed to discuss the important fact that Beverly Hills Fire Department vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances and rescue vehicles) do not have access to the Garden property. First responders can only access the Garden on foot. A building overhang on the property blocks access to the property by rescue

and emergency vehicles. because of the overhang in the parking lot, no fire trucks or emergency vehicles can access the property.

Note, the six-acre property is undulated, and some areas have limited, uneven pathways compounding an emergency response. This limitation has the potential to delay a critical rescue as well as delay transport to hospital facilities especially when rescue personnel have access limitations.

The fire risk at the Gardens presents another unique concern. According to the County staff a pressurized fire hydrant exists in the front of the Gardens' grounds. The City Fire Marshall, however, failed to indicate knowledge of this hydrant. In the event of a serious fire, however, additional fire hydrants may be needed. Any backup hydrant would need to extend considerable distances, possibly even from Carolyn Way, Cove, and/or Crescent. The nearest fire hydrant appears to be at 1017 Crescent Drive, a considerable distance from the entrance to the Gardens. This fact will again complicate and delay any response to a fire emergency at the Gardens, perhaps even threaten historic features of the property and potentially spread fire to nearby residences. Any concern for the safety of visitors and staff compels rules and operational procedures which account for the safety limitations of the property. The DSEIR fails to address this critical concern.

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Special Events will require set up on the property, since there is no kitchen or catering facilities. The DSEIR also talks about setting up additional lighting and sound systems. Not only will these require many people entering the Gardens to set up and take down, in addition to the attendees at the Special Events, but there is also a known risk that catering facilities, lighting and sound systems malfunction and present a new threat of fire.

During Special Events, cars clog the neighbor streets, blocking many driveways and limiting Emergency vehicles from accessing private homes in the area. If the neighbors have an emergency and call 911, the emergency vehicle may not be able to reach them.

As residents of Beverly Hills, we believe that the risk of Fire and Emergency is a critical adverse impact which the County DSEIR has completely ignored.

Sincerely,

Kathy and Al Checchi      [REDACTED] Cove Way

Roxanne Heptner      [REDACTED] Cove Way

Jodi and Don Stine      [REDACTED] Cove Way

Michael and Michelle Weiner      [REDACTED] Carolyn Way

Michael McAlister      [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Cove Way, [REDACTED] Carolyn Way, 1



August 17, 2022

Ms. Jui Ing Chien  
Park Planner  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
1000 S. Fremont Ave.  
Unit #40 A-9 West, 3rd Floor  
Alhambra, CA 91083

Dear Ms. Chien,

I live at [REDACTED], directly behind the Robinson's estate. I attended the last two meeting and I was surprised by how the language changed so drastically. Compromise, concerns and compassion was at the first one I attended. "We can and will change any ordinance that stands in our way". We can rewrite them "for the greater good", seemed to be your mantra at this last meeting. Our concerns were no longer your concerns. What happened to us? We matter, we are the people who will have to adjust or move.

Noise travels in the canyons, beyond the immediate area and the increase of events will bring loud music to the area, yet you don't address this. Living across the street, I have had to shut all windows and doors. For four events a year this was tolerable, but for 24 events this will be intolerable.

We live with the threat of fire daily, especially now that our water has been drastically reduced. The locals are aware of this threat but will the others be as concerned?

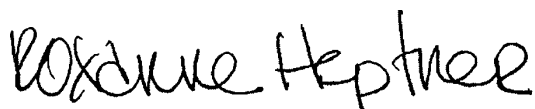
We the residents live with traffic congestion daily as was are wedged between two canyons, Benedict and Coldwater. The intersections of Hartford & Benedict and Lexington & Hartford are lined daily with bumper to bumper traffic. The intersection of Lexington and Hartford is so congested it is impossible to get to Cove Way without joining in the line of cars. Your SEIR report concludes that only Elden way will be impacted, this is physically not true. Crescent, Elden and Lexington is an extremely congested intersection due to the hotel on Crescent.

I, along with the local residents agree on some increase programs, especially those for children. I cannot agree to 24 additional events. Compromise is needed.

If this was you, and not me in this situation, how would you feel? The county will ruin the tranquility and safety we have in order to increase revenue for the county,

What was the original intent of Mrs. Robinson? Not this.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roxanne Heptner". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Roxanne" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name "Heptner".

Roxanne Heptner

December 8, 2021

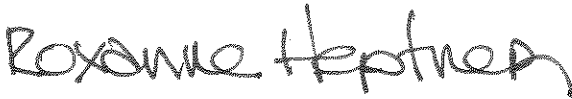
Julie Yom, AICP, Park Planner  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
1000 S. Fremont Ave.  
Unit #40 A-9 West, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Alhambra, California 91083

Dear Julie,

I am writing you regarding the proposal to expand the Robinson estate in Beverly Hills. If this proposal were to move forward it would ruin the tranquility for every resident north of Sunset Blvd. Noise pollution would affect every resident in the canyons as noise carries far beyond the immediate area. We live in a very restricted parking city already; home construction is at an all-time high with vehicles lined up every street. Where would the availability for parking happen? Congestion in the area already is dense during the commute hours; with both canyons, Benedict and Coldwater having an overflow impact of traffic in the immediate area. To add to congestion will be intolerable. Property values will be affected as this increase in congestion and noise pollution will have a serious impact to the community. Beverly Hills will be the one to absorb the loss not Los Angeles.

I doubt that Mrs. Robinson's intention was to see her beautiful estate disrupt this area for commerce. I ask that you respect our neighborhood and keep it as is and search for other avenues of income.

Respectfully



Roxanne Heptner  
[REDACTED] Cove Way  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

## Objection to proposed changes to the Robinson's Gardens by LA County

Sharon Messer [REDACTED]

Wed 8/17/2022 3:49 PM

To: Chloe Chen cchen@beverlyhills.org

**CAUTION: External Sender**

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*This is a copy of a letter that I wrote to the LA County Supervisors. I feel strongly that the County has its own agenda which does not take in the concerns of the residents who live close to the Gardens. The County demand has always seemed to be excessive and is poorly defined. Please include this in the Tuesday Council meeting agenda. Thank you*

Sharon Messer

[REDACTED] Cove Way  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Ms. Solis, Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Kuehl, Ms. Hahn, Ms. Davenport and Ms. Barger  
I am a neighbor to the Robinson Gardens and a resident of Beverly Hills. I feel that it is totally inappropriate for those who are not close neighbors to say that we will not be impacted by the proposed changes and that we need to live with the consequences "for the greater good". I find that the SEIR report is incomplete. We are impacted and your demands are totally unreasonable.

1. Every time there is an event on Elden Way, we hear every word and every song as if the microphone and/or amplifier were used on Cove Way in our own backyards. Sound carries in the foothills.
2. When the RG has had their major fundraisers, event staff, volunteers, etc. have parked on our street as they set up and run the event. Often not just for one day but several consecutive days. Parking is inadequate for event staff.
3. There is no definition as to the number of special events in terms of type of event or when an event must end. Perhaps you should consider stating the number of events that are directly supported by the RG and where 100% of the profit benefits the Garden versus the number of outside charity events or family events you plan to hold whereby the Gardens only receives a facility or use fee. Why have you not specified a cap on the number of people who may attend a special event including staff?
4. You are proposing that the Gardens be open until Sunset. Does this mean that you will have all staff and personnel off the property by the time twilight ends? Or are you planning to extend the hours for special weekend and evening events? It would be much more palatable if all staff, guests, and personnel were off the property by the end of twilight. (For example, on June 23, the longest day of the year, Sunset is at 8:10 and twilight ends at 8:37. August 10 Sunset was at 7:47 with last light scheduled for 8:11 and in the winter months when the days are much shorter, twilight ends by 6:00 p.m. Does this mean you will be having more events from May through September because of the colder evenings and shorter days the rest of the year?
5. The County is proposing 200 visitors per day, does this number also include personnel and event staff? It takes a lot of staff to run any kind of an event. Is there a cap on the number of people who may attend a special event or whether staff/personnel are included in this cap as

this is not stated in your proposal. This implies that you can have an unlimited number. When there is a major evening event, a lot of staff and personnel come and go throughout the day for set-up. This is a lot more traffic and trips than you have proposed.

6. Once the County changes the number of events, hours, etc. who has the authority to decide whether visitation to the Gardens will continue to be by appointment only? Or that the definition of a special event wouldn't be changed? Or that the County wouldn't decide to run events without RG docents being present.

7. While you encourage public transportation and ridesharing, the reality is that many people *park their cars on neighboring streets* and walk to the Gardens when there is a large event. You cannot promise or guarantee that guests and staff will not park in our neighborhood.

8. As a neighbor who has supported the Robinson Garden in the past, I fully support their daytime activities but object to more than the 4 evening events currently allowed. I support the use of the Garden as an educational and research facility as well as a Botanical Garden. I DO NOT SUPPORT THE USE OF THE GARDEN AS A PARTY VENUE and am disappointed that no one has ever asked us what would be reasonable.

Sincerely,

Sharon A. Messer

████████ Cove Way, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

**Sent Via Email to [ttway@beverlyhills.org](mailto:ttway@beverlyhills.org)**

November 29, 2021

Ms. Timmi Tway  
City Planner  
Building and Planning Department  
City of Beverly Hills  
455 N, Rexford  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Re: ***County of Los Angeles Proposed Operational Changes  
Virginia Robinson Gardens  
1008 Elden Way  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210***

Dear Ms. Tway:

Please accept this communication as an expression of my personal concern on the above-referenced subject. I ask that you include my comments as an attachment to your staff report to City Council on the subject.

I live on Carolyn Way in Beverly Hills. My property shares a common boundary with the Virginia Robinson Gardens. What happens at the Gardens affects not only my property, but the entire neighborhood including Laurel Way, Summit Drive, Cove, Carolyn Way, and Marilyn Way.

Please understand that the Gardens poses a unique fire and emergency response risk, that is not well understood. The proposed County operational changes for the Gardens only exacerbates the risk dramatically.

To explain, from the City Fire Department, I have learned the following:

- **City emergency vehicles have no access to the Gardens.**
- **No pressurized fire hydrant exists on the property** (that the Fire Department is aware of).
- If the County does not seek a city event permit, the city Fire Marshall does not review the plans.
- No city Fire Safety Officer inspects Garden events unless a city permit condition exists to do so.

The significance of this information means that in a health emergency event, city fire responders can only access the property only on foot. While I fully appreciate that city's first responders will exert their utmost efforts to rescue any injured party, those efforts will be hampered due to undisputed circumstances. The six-acre Garden property is

undulating and some areas have limited pathways or stairs compounding an emergency response. These limitations have the potential to delay a critical rescue as well as delay transport to hospital facilities for injured parties.

The fire risk at the garden presents another unique concern. As stated, no known fire hydrant exists on the garden grounds. In the event of a fire, hoses would need to extend considerable distances, possibly even from Carolyn Way, Cove and/or Crescent Drive. The nearest fire hydrant appears to be at 1017 Crescent Drive, a considerable distance from the entrance to the Gardens.

One cannot ignore either that the Gardens sits in a Wildfire Designated Hazard Area. The Garden property includes numerous highly flammable trees including palms and eucalyptus. Again, the Garden has no pressurized fire hydrant. The county is "literally playing with fire" to the detriment of the immediate neighborhood and the city.

Increasing the days of operations, increasing daily attendance, increasing days of operation, increasing hours of operation, increasing the number of events six-fold from 2012 levels and 12-fold from 1980 levels, endangers not only the visitors, Garden workers, the immediate neighborhood, and the city first responders, but may also trigger city liabilities.

I urge the City Council to advise the LA County Parks and Recreation Department that its proposed operational changes imperil not only visitors to the Gardens but represent a significant environmental impact that cannot be mitigated.

Please include this correspondence as part of the staff report to City Council. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Charles Alpert



*Southern California Orthopedic Surgical & Medical Associates*

**BEHROOZ (BRUCE) BROUKHIM, M.D., Inc.**  
BOARD CERTIFIED ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

*Member:*

*American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons  
Arthroscopy Association of North America  
International Society of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery  
And Orthopedic Sports Medicine*

*Orthopedic Surgery  
Arthroscopy  
Sports Injuries  
Joint Replacement  
Fractures  
Spinal Injuries*

November 29, 2021

Dear Mayor Wunderlich and the Members of the City Council,

We have become aware that LA County intends to change the operations of the Virginia Robinsons Gardens.

Increase the visitors to 200 visitors a day  
Increase the days to every day, including all Holidays  
Increase the hours until sunset  
Increase the special events to 24 events a year, up to 4 a month

We are especially concerned that the special events will include Weddings and celebrations.

All of this will substantially impact the noise in our neighborhood and the parking on our neighborhood streets. We have a very quiet neighborhood and all value our peaceful surroundings.

Please help us protect our neighborhood.

Thank you,

  
Behrooz and Angel Broukhim  


[↻ Reply all](#) | [🗑 Delete](#) [Junk](#) | [⌵](#) [...](#)

## Fw: Opposition to Changes to Robinson's Gardens Operations

**Timmi Tway**

Today, 5:21 PM

City Clerk; Chloe Chen; Ryan Gohlich [⌵](#)[↻ Reply all](#) | [⌵](#)

Inbox

Label: E2K10 731 Day Retention Tag (2 years and 1 day) Expires: 12/7/2023 5:21 PM

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**From:** Daniel Farasat <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 6, 2021 5:11 PM  
**To:** Timmi Tway  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Masud Hakim  
**Subject:** Opposition to Changes to Robinson's Gardens Operations

**CAUTION: External Sender**

Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments

Dear Ms. Tway:

I am writing to convey my opposition to the county's proposed changes to the Gardens' operations.

I strongly support the Gardens' role in education for those throughout the county but these proposed changes are not in conformance with that goal.

I practically grew up on Elden Way, and I am planning to build a home on Carolyn Way - adjacent to the Gardens.

With only 4 events a year, the Gardens cause substantial traffic, noise and air quality issues -- before, during and after event days. With the proposed 24 events per year and large events like weddings without limits on parking, the environmental impacts would be insufferable. Additionally, the proposed extension of hours of operations (including Sundays) for visitors, would make the imposition on the neighborhood limitless.

The goals of Virginia Robinson's bequest can be met without turning the Gardens into a commercial enterprise/event space for hire. The proposed changes are anathema to her bequest and would impose an undue burden to the neighborhood and the City of Beverly Hills.

I would also appreciate a link to tomorrow's hearing.

Sincerely,



[↻ Reply all](#) | [🗑 Delete](#) [Junk](#) | [⌵](#) [⋮](#)

## FW: Urgent - Opposition to Virginia Robinson Garden Operation

**Timmi Tway**

Tue 12/7/2021 8:07 AM

To: **City Clerk**Cc: Ryan Gohlich; Chloe Chen [^](#)[↻ Reply all](#) | [⌵](#)

Inbox

Label: E2K10 731 Day Retention Tag (2 years and 1 day) Expires: 12/8/2023 8:07 AM

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**From:** Jonah Feit [mailto:████████████████████]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 6, 2021 7:59 PM  
**To:** Timmi Tway <ttway@beverlyhills.org>  
**Subject:** Urgent - Opposition to Virginia Robinson Garden Operation

**CAUTION: External Sender**

Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments

Dear Mayor Wunderlich and the City Council,

My Grandparents, Ben and Esther Kashanian, and I are **strongly opposed** to the Virginia Robinson Gardens proposed changes to their operations.

While we are supportive of the Gardens mission, the changes proposed will adversely affect our neighborhood and threaten our right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

The Gardens already disregards the parking laws, and increasing the number of events from 4 to 24 will have a major negative impact on the traffic and parking situation in our neighborhood.

There are times when emergency vehicles would not be able to get through. We do not want to have a tragedy occur because the Gardens were not interested in following safety protocols.

These proposed changes are alarming. Increasing from 100 to 200 visitors a day, when there are only 20 parking spaces at the Gardens will clog our neighborhood.

Also adding Weddings, family celebrations, meetings, and commercial filming will essentially change the Gardens into a commercial venue, and will completely ruin the fabric of our neighborhood. The noise from these events alone will disrupt the peaceful nature of our neighborhood.

In the face of resident opposition, the Gardens already expanded outside of their original scope in 2014. This cannot be allowed to happen again, and in fact, perhaps they should be forced to return to the prior original conditions.

 Reply all |   Delete    Junk |     




We respectfully request that the City Council stand by your residents and take a resolute position against the expansion in its totality.

Respectfully,

Jonah Feit

Ben Kashanian

Esther Kashanian

 Crescent Drive

 Reply all |   Delete Junk |  ...





## Fw: Virginia Gardens proposed increased activity



Timmi Tway

Today, 5:21 PM

City Clerk; Ryan Gohlich; Chloe Chen 

 Reply all | 

Inbox

Label: E2K10 731 Day Retention Tag (2 years and 1 day) Expires: 12/7/2023 5:21 PM

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 6, 2021 4:14 PM  
**To:** jyom@parks.lacounty.gov  
**Cc:** Timmi Tway  
**Subject:** Virginia Gardens proposed increased activity

**CAUTION: External Sender**

Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments

Dear Julie,

My husband and I want to register our strong opposition to the newly proposed increase in activity slated for Virginia Gardens which sits atop our cul-de-sac. We are proud to have this lovely jewel in our midst but we object to tripling access to it seven days a week, especially on weekends. This was not the contract that had been negotiated when we bought our home at [REDACTED] North Crescent Drive. The congestion and traffic will not only destroy the ambience of our neighborhood, but will decrease the value of our homes as well. I'm sure the County would not be pleased to have all of our neighborhood come to them to recapture compensation for their losses imposed on them without a vote!

Paul and I strongly support our City, County and neighborhood. We would like to be reassured that our City and County support their constituents as well. Please reconsider these excessive changes and let us work together for a peaceful resolution.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Vera and Paul Guerin

 Reply all |   Delete Junk |  ...




## Fw: Virginia Robinson Gardens



Timmi Tway

Today, 12:40 PM



City Clerk; Ryan Gohlich; Chloe Chen; 6-Laurence Wiener; RWG DavidSnow 

 Reply all | 

Inbox

Label: E2K10 731 Day Retention Tag (2 years and 1 day) Expires: 12/7/2023 12:40 PM

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**From:** Dar Mahboubi < >  
**Sent:** Monday, December 6, 2021 12:14:58 PM  
**To:** Timmi Tway  
**Cc:**  Masoud Hakim  
**Subject:** Virginia Robinson Gardens

CAUTION: External Sender  
Use caution when clicking links or opening attachments

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Dear Mayor Wunderlich:  
Dear members of the City Council:  
We, the undersigned, are writing to voice our objections to LA County's suggested modifications to the schedule of operations at Robinson Gardens.  
These proposed changes will essentially render the Gardens into a commercial venue, and will completely ruin the fabric of our peaceful residential neighborhood.  
We request that the City of Beverly Hills voice it's objections to the County in the strongest form possible.  
Respectfully:

dar Mahboubi  
Mahie Mahboubi  
Jonathan Mahboubi  
Rebecca Mahboubi

Mayor Wunderlich and Members of the City Council,

As an attorney, who formerly practiced Estate Planning law in Washington, DC, I have looked at the Original Grant Deed and the Agreement. \* I maintain that many of the new changes proposed by the County- Weddings, family ceremonies, meetings or commercial filming- go beyond the original Donor Intent of Virginia Robinson, as contained in the Original Grant Deed and the Agreement.

In the original Grant Deed, page 2, line 17-20 states

“1. The said property, excluding the buildings thereon, shall be held and used by said Grantee perpetually for the purpose of an arboretum or botanic garden and for no other purpose inconsistent with said use.”

On page 2, line 27-30, the Grant Deed further states,

“4. No business for profit shall ever be conducted on said property but the same shall at all reasonable times be open and available for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public as an arboretum garden.”

An arboretum is defined as

“A botanical garden devoted to trees.”

A botanic garden is defined as

“An establishment where plants are grown for display to the public and often for scientific study.”

In the Agreement, several other uses of the residence were specified. On page 4 and 5,

“to use said residence building, or make it available as follows: (1) to the extent feasible and practicable, use in the nature of a museum for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public, or (2) as a guest house for official visitors to the County of Los Angeles, city of Beverly Hills or other incorporated cities located in the county of Los Angeles, (3) for library or educational purposes, or for any other

charitable purpose deemed appropriate by Second Party, including a combination of (1) and (2) above.....”

“No use of the said residence or contents shall be made or permitted for any purpose contrary to the provisions of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.....”

I believe the County should have to follow the intent of Virginia Robinson, as spelled out in the relevant documents and a legal argument could be made that the new proposed purposes of Weddings, family ceremonies, meetings or commercial filming go beyond those purposes.

If the County breaches or violates the conditions, pursuant to the original Grant Deed and the Agreement, the title to the Virginia Robinson Gardens vests in the City of Beverly Hills. The City would then have to follow the conditions set forth in both documents.

Thank you,

Kathryn Checchi, JD  
Georgetown University Law School ‘78  
Member of the DC Bar and Texas State Bar

\*Agreement made in 1976 by and between Alfredo De La Vega and Security Pacific National Bank as Co-conservators of the Estate of Virginia D. Robinson, and the County of Los Angeles. The City of Beverly Hills, as a contingent remainderman beneficiary, agreed to be bound by the terms of this agreement by Resolution No. 77-R

Dear Mayor Wunderlich and the City Council,

We are vehemently opposed to the Virginia Robinson Gardens proposed changes to their operations.

While we are supportive of the Gardens mission, it should not come at our expense.

These changes are outrageous and threaten our right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

The Gardens already disregards the parking laws, and the Elden Way no parking restrictions. They allow visitors and event trucks to take over Elden Way on a regular basis despite that being prohibited, and routinely block resident driveways cutting off access to our homes.

There are times when emergency vehicles would not be able to get through. We do not want to have a tragedy occur because the Gardens were not interested in following safety protocols.

These proposed changes are alarming. They essentially change the Gardens into a commercial venue, and will completely ruin the fabric of our neighborhood.

In the face of resident opposition, the Gardens already expanded outside of their original scope in 2014. This cannot be allowed to happen again, and in fact, perhaps they should be forced to return to the prior original conditions.

While the current situation is bad enough, these changes significantly threaten our safety, our security, and our way of life.

We respectfully request that the City Council stand by your residents and take a resolute position against the expansion in its totality.

Yours Sincerely,

Brian & Todd  
Brenda Todd

B. Todd  
[REDACTED] SUMMIT DR  
B.H.C.A-90210

Dear Mayor Wunderlich and the City Council,

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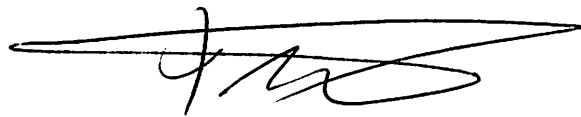
While the current situation is bad enough, these changes significantly threaten our safety, our security, and our way of life.

We respectfully request that the City Council stand by your residents and take a resolute position against the expansion in its totality.

Yours Sincerely,

Jacqueline of ISAAC MORADI

 N HILLCREST DR. B.H CA 90210





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These changes are outrageous and threaten our right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

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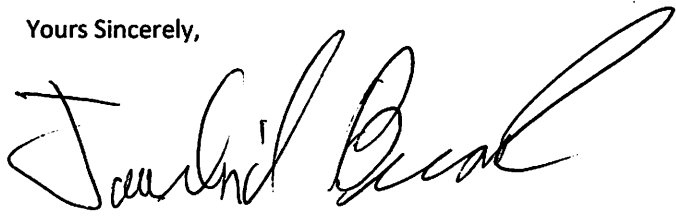
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While the current situation is bad enough, these changes significantly threaten our safety, our security, and our way of life.

We respectfully request that the City Council stand by your residents and take a resolute position against the expansion in its totality.

Yours Sincerely,



Julie BEROUK

Dear Mayor Wunderlich and the City Council,

We are vehemently opposed to the Virginia Robinson Gardens proposed changes to their operations.

While we are supportive of the Gardens mission, it should not come at our expense.

These changes are outrageous and threaten our right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

The Gardens already disregards the parking laws, and the Elden Way no parking restrictions. They allow visitors and event trucks to take over Elden Way on a regular basis despite that being prohibited, and routinely block resident driveways cutting off access to our homes.

There are times when emergency vehicles would not be able to get through. We do not want to have a tragedy occur because the Gardens were not interested in following safety protocols.


These proposed changes are alarming. They essentially change the Gardens into a commercial venue, and will completely ruin the fabric of our neighborhood.

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While the current situation is bad enough, these changes significantly threaten our safety, our security, and our way of life.

We respectfully request that the City Council stand by your residents and take a resolute position against the expansion in its totality.

  
Yours Sincerely,

 LAUREL WAT  
MEH31 BOULDER

Dec. 6, 2021

Dear Mayor and Citi Council members,

I live in right next to Virginia Robinson Garden. The Garden is located at the cul de sac street in the complete residential area. With the philanthropic heart the donor Mrs. Robinson donated her residential home to the County and then to City, if the condition is broken, so that it can be preserved and still viewed by the public as was cherished and cared after her life. Thus the gifting her home to be a garden after her life was made based on the mutual understanding and agreement by all parties concerned, which must include the donor Mrs. Robinson, her neighbors in addition to L.A. County government officers, that her home would be open to public without causing harms to the neighbors to the extent her home and furnishings are preserved.

Since my moving in in 2015, here is what I observed:

1. Crime. People loitering around the street either while waiting their appointment or to look at the Garden location for searching. As resident, whenever strangers wander, we have to worry if they are for the Garden visits or for something else. My house had intruders twice already. I notified the Garden superintendent about it, and upon my notice he added multiple cameras for the garden for its safety.

In order to prevent crime and protect the residents, Beverly Hills City Ambassador hot line tells us to report any suspicious people who don't seem to belong to the neighbor. How will it be possible to tell who is who. We will be open to more crimes and targets.

2. Chaotic environment. Whenever there is an event, the days before and after, the catering and equipment trucks occupy the street and create the chaos. At night we often hear loud music from the Garden or some neighbors. The Beverly Hills City and this neighbor are no more an areas for quiet enjoyment. Unless the County and the City wants to blend the L.A. County intend to blend whole downward.
3. Emergency Safety. During the events, the guests and visitors occupy the streets, and we have hard time just to get in and out of our house. When there is emergency situation, it will cause a life threatening situation due to the traffic whether it is just parked or whether it is slow moving traffic to find parking when and where there is no thorough way.

There are so many urgent issues the Los Angeles County and the City and all other governments are expected for its constituents like providing low income housing, homeless issues, etc. Instead of working on those urgent matters, how come they create this matter during this pandemic, where crimes and vandalisms are soaring, and in the name of giving the public more benefits?

I sincerely request the Beverly Hills take active action to dismiss the proposal. Otherwise, the County is in violation of the gift agreement by the donor Mrs. Robinson.

Sincerely yours,

Robin Kim



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## Re: Virginia Robinson Gardens



Timmi Tway

Today, 8:14 AM

JODI STINE [REDACTED] Chloe Chen ▾

↻ Reply all | ▾

Inbox

Label: E2K10 731 Day Retention Tag (2 years and 1 day) Expires: 12/1/2023 8:14 AM

Hello Jodi,

I have received your email and it will be provided to the City Council,

Thank you,

Timmi

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**From:** JODI STINE [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 30, 2021 8:00:00 AM  
**To:** Timmi Tway  
**Subject:** Virginia Robinson Gardens

**CAUTION: External Sender**

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Dear Timmi,

My name is Jodi Stine and I'm writing to share my concerns about the recent proposed 100% increase in daily visitors and the 500% increase in yearly events by the Robinson Gardens.

As a neighbor, our main concerns are:

- 1). #1 SAFETY - With the exponentially large increase in visitors, who is going to keep the Beverly Hills residents safe? With the recent spate of crimes in Beverly Hills, safety seems like an issue that should be of the utmost priority. How is the city of Beverly Hills going to address this increase in visitors?
- 2). PARKING - it gets crazy with cars on Cove Way, Hartford and Lexington- Cove Way in particular is not a wide street - and parking is only allowed on one side; this makes parking at a premium. Our driveway is used as a 3-point turning point and we've had our share of semi-blocked driveways. How will the city handle this parking/traffic/safety mess?
- 3). NOISE POLLUTION - our neighborhood is shaped with some steep hills and the noise travels - what impact will the increased amount of visitors have on our quiet neighborhood?

 Reply all | 
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  Junk | 




I am asking the City Council's assistance to help us address this proposal, as I believe, it will have a negative impact on our neighborhood.

We enjoy very much living near the Gardens; they have been good neighbors! In return, we have supported their fundraising efforts and mission - and have learned to live with and accommodate the current state of visitors and events.

However, now, with these proposed changes, I fear that we will be looking forward to barbed wire fencing, security guards, and parking lots - exactly what I would expect living next to a public catering hall.

Please consider helping us find a compromise!

Thank you,  
Jodi & Don Stine



*\*Could you please confirm that you received this email.*

	<b><i>1980</i></b>	<b><i>2014</i></b>	<b><i>2021 Proposal</i></b>
<i>Days Open to Public</i>	4 days/ week Tues-Fri Holidays: Closed	5 days/week Mon-Fri; closed on Holidays	<b><i>Seven Days a Week</i></b> <b><i>No Holiday Closures</i></b>
<i>Hours</i>	9:30 AM – 3:30 PM	9 AM– 4 PM	<b>9:30 AM - Sunset</b>
Attendance Limits/Tours	100 visitors/day With reservations	100 visitor/day With reservations	<b>200 visitors/day with reservations</b>
Types of Events	Educational Programing	Public Programs conforming to hours and visitor limits	<b>Existing Events plus private family events such as weddings.</b>
Special Uses	2/Year Patron Party Garden Tour No Attendance Limits	4/year Garden Tour (2 consecutive days)	<b>24/year; up to 4 events per month</b>
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to 20 spaces onsite</li> <li>• No Street Parking</li> <li>• No Walk-ins</li> <li>• No Drop-offs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onsite parking only</li> <li>• No street parking</li> <li>• Walk-ins allowed</li> </ul>	<b>No restrictions indicated</b>

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

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## Fw: Robinsons Gardens from a neighboring residnet



Timmi Tway

Today, 6:18 AM

Chloe Chen ▾

↻ Reply all | ▾

Inbox

Label: E2K10 731 Day Retention Tag (2 years and 1 day) Expires: 12/14/2023 6:18 AM

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**From:** Morales, Fernando [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 10, 2021 5:17:46 PM  
**To:** Patricia Wittenberg; jyom@parks.lacounty.gov  
**Cc:** Timmi Tway; Powell, Marley  
**Subject:** RE: Robinsons Gardens from a neighboring residnet

**CAUTION: External Sender**

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Hi Patricia and Armin,

Thank you for your e-mail to Supervisor Kuehl regarding the proposed operational changes at Virginia Robinson Gardens. I have made sure that it reached her. Your input is important to Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. For that reason, she asked me to respond to your inquiry.

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has just initiated the process of considering and analyzing the potential environmental impacts of the proposed operational changes. Specifically, a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) will be prepared and is anticipated to be completed by April 2022 at which time the public will have the opportunity to review the document and provide comments. DPR will also hold a community meeting in April 2022 to present the SEIR and receive public input.

I'm glad that you're connected to DPR as well. Thank you for reaching out to our office and sharing your input.

Sincerely,

Fernando

**Fernando R. Morales** (He/Him/His)

District Director, West/Metro LA

O: [REDACTED]

C: [REDACTED]

[Web/Facebook/Twitter](#)

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Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

[Sign Up for Kuehl Happenings](#)  
[Commendation Requests](#)  
[COVID-19 Resources](#)  
[LA County's Response to COVID-19](#)

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**From:** Patricia Wittenberg [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 10, 2021 3:46 PM  
**To:** Sheila <Sheila@bos.lacounty.gov>; jyom@parks.lacounty.gov  
**Cc:** ttway@beverlyhills.org  
**Subject:** RE: Robinsons Gardens from a neighboring residnet

Dear Ms. Kuehl and Ms Yom,  
Please see our attached letter regarding Robinsons Gardens. Thank you.  
Cc to the City of Beverly Hills.  
Regards,

Patricia & Armin Wittenberg  
[REDACTED] Carolyn Way  
Beverly Hills 90210  
[REDACTED]



Patricia & Armin Wittenberg



Carolyn Way

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Sheila Kuehl and Julie Yom,

Thank you for taking the time to read/listen to us residents' issues regarding proposed changes to Robinsons Gardens.

We, just as many of our neighbors have expressed, are in opposition to the proposed changes for Robinsons Gardens for the same reasons: it would increase unwanted noise, music as well as create traffic, parking, and enforcement problems for the City of Beverly Hills etc.

We have lived here for over 20 years. We assure you, that this is an extremely quiet neighborhood—one of many reasons we chose to purchase a home here. When the annual fundraiser for Robinsons Gardens takes place, we assure you we easily hear loud music and....loud conversation/voices. We are happy to be gracious neighbors to accommodate this important fundraiser.

I might note that one proponent of the proposed changes, made a comment that Virginia Robinson held THREE party events per week. As if that justifies having increased noise and music in our neighborhood in 2021/2022?? That is an irrelevant statement...

The proposal of having up to 24 special events or weddings per year is unacceptable for a few reasons:

--The idea is a commercial enterprise. Did Virginia Robinson allow this?

--Theoretically.....IF these weddings/events were to take place, where does the profit money go to? Does Robinson Gardens have the benefit of the funds? OR...does the profit money go to a Los Angeles County general fund

--Robinsons Gardens is VERY small...only 6 acres. There is truly not enough acreage and foliage to dampen music and voices of events. Sound travels very easily through this neighborhood. The County would be forcing us to listen to wedding/function music that others



chose? The music could run the range from Italian, Greek, Scottish bagpipers, Rap, to Polka music...etc. This would be an intrusion to the “quiet enjoyment of our property” which we believe residents are legally entitled to.

--The idea of increasing the hours to sunset: we can imagine, if this is instituted, that the next idea would be to have music/concerts on the lawn in the evening. Again...this would be intrusive to the neighborhood.

I have been a member of the Huntington Gardens Art Guild in San Marino for over 10 years (as Parker Wittenberg), and have witnessed their increase in activities held over the years, in filming, music etc. that can increase noise, sound and traffic. One BIG difference they have with Robinsons Gardens—Huntington Gardens has 207 acres of trees, vegetations and buildings to mute music and other sounds on their property. Hence residents in the neighboring houses would hear nothing or next to nothing. They also have a very large parking lot.

To do the noise studies, traffic studies etc, LA County has to spend tax money to do so. We would prefer our tax dollars to be spent on keeping all LA County parks clean, maintained, with outreach as necessary, for the homeless and drug addicted who may also be visiting the park.

The ideal would be to close down the proposed changes to Robinsons Gardens....and do not spend money to do the studies.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Patricia Wittenberg

Armin Wittenberg

Michael & Michele Wiener

[REDACTED]  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
[REDACTED]

November 29, 2021

Honorable Mayor Wunderlich & Councilmembers  
City of Beverly Hills  
455 North Rexford Drive  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Re: Virginia Robinson Gardens

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am informed that Los Angeles County is proposing to change the operations of the Virginia Robinson Gardens in the following manner:

- Increase the visitors to two hundred (200) visitors a day
- Increase the days to every day, including all Holidays
- Increase the hours until sunset
- Increase the special events to twenty-four (24) events a year, up to 4 times in one month

Such changes will necessarily impact traffic and noise in our neighborhood and make our streets even more dangerous. In addition, the proposed special events (e.g., weddings and celebrations) will disturb the quiet of our neighborhood.

The value of property and the desirability of living in Beverly Hills, and especially the hills of Beverly Hills, is linked to safety, traffic, minimal transient visitors in residential neighborhoods, and quiet streets. We think that the proposed changes will adversely impact the very attributes which make Beverly Hills a desirable place to live.

Please work with Los Angeles County and other involved parties to limit, if not stop, the proposed changes from being implemented.



Michael Wiener

Patricia & Armin Wittenberg

[REDACTED]  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mayor Wunderlich and the Members of the City Council,

LA County is proposing a change the operations of the Virginia Robinsons Gardens.

Increase the visitors to 200 visitors a day

Increase the days to every day, including all Holidays

Increase the hours until sunset

Increase the special events to 24 events a year, up to 4 a month

These changes will adversely impact the noise in our neighborhood. Please understand noise, music, and human voices waft loudly throughout these low canyons. We are kitty corner to Robinsons Gardens. We are fine being gracious and accommodating to the annual fundraiser for Robinsons Gardens. However, the proposed special events, which will include Weddings and celebrations, will disturb the daily quiet of our neighborhood and increase parking on our neighborhood streets. Presently, we have a very quiet neighborhood and all value our peaceful surroundings.

Please understand too, that there are other events that go on in the neighborhood that are allowed and we need to accommodate, i.e. filming at Grayhall on Carolyn Way. We are just about midway between Robinsons Gardens and Grayhall. Hence, we hear all the noise and commotion from both locations as parties and filming goes on.

Please help us protect our neighborhood. After being on a Zoom call with LA County Parks & Recreation, and various concerned neighbors, it appears to us that LA County has not really thought out the repercussions to the neighborhood prior to putting out their idea of commercializing Robinsons Gardens.

Thank you,

Regards,

Patricia & Armin Wittenberg

Dec 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Mayor Wunderlich and City Council Members,

I represent the Checchis who live on Cove Way very near the Gardens.

The nearby residents desperately need your help.

My client and I have spoken with a number of residents who live in the immediate area, and they recount story after story of the Gardens being disrespectful neighbors who routinely break the rules.

They refuse to cut back foliage that hangs into one neighbor's yards, and threatened them when they attempted to cut back the trees themselves which is my understanding they have a right to do.

They disregard the no parking rule on Elden Way. Event trucks and cars block driveways and streets to such a degree that residents are routinely denied access to their homes, and have to cancel their own family events.

Residents, many of whom are elderly, are concerned for their safety as regularly the street is so blocked that emergency vehicles simply cannot access their homes.

They tell of past Elden Way neighbors who have moved because of the negative impacts the Garden had on their lives.

The Gardens have no interest in creating parking on their property, yet they are quite happy to impose the impacts of their guests and events onto my clients and their neighbors.

There is not only a need to address these expansion requests of the Gardens, there is a need to address the current situation.

You are hearing from a number of residents in the immediate area- Elden Way, Cove Way, Carolyn Way, etc. Look at how many properties the Gardens shares property lines with!

The county told us they intend to follow all of the Beverly Hills residential rules. The Gardens is **not** a residence, and it should not be treated as such.

This image taken from their website shows available capacity of 865 people.

### Sites

Pool Pavilion – 50 Capacity  
Rose Garden – 60 Capacity  
Great Lawn – 300 Capacity  
Back Terrazzo Patio – 75 Capacity  
Tennis Court – 300 Capacity (seated)  
Poolside – 40 Capacity (per side)



Some ideas:

- 1- Assign a code enforcement officer dedicated solely to this area which is paid for by the Gardens
- 2- Ensure that the Gardens have to apply for Special Event Permits
- 3- Ensure that with their current events, they have secured designated off- residential area parking that visitors are shuttled to
- 4- The Gardens should not be treated like a residential property in any way, shape or form. They do not behave like a residential property, and they are not a residential property. They are functioning at a commercial property in terms of function, use and impacts despite their non-profit status.
- 5- How are the liquor licenses to be handled if they are allowed weddings?

The resident's way of life is being severely threatened. They have a right as Council Member Gold said recently to the "quiet enjoyment of their homes" which they are currently being denied, and which is under serious attack by these new requests.

We feel the SEIR process will be a farce with the outcome already predetermined. Even if the impacts do not reach EIR and CEQA concern levels, they will far exceed what should be permissible for the neighborhood.

We looked at the Grant Deed and I think the argument could be made that the Gardens are actually currently in violation of the terms of that Deed. Our position is that the new intensification certainly is in violation.

This intensification is bad for your residents, bad for Beverly Hills, and bad for the health and safety of those in the area.

We respectfully ask that you do all that you can in your power to protect them.

Yours Sincerely,

Debbie Weiss

Dear Mayor Wunderlich and City Council Members,

Residents are very concerned about the significant negative impacts the intensification of the Garden's proposed uses will have upon us, and we ask that you take a position either in opposition to this expansion, or with a view to scaling it back significantly and imposing mitigation measures.

Given the Council's recent positions and votes to take action on Air BNBs, and Fractional Ownership due to the impacts created by transient residential use, we ask that the Council vote similarly here as these impacts are of a similar nature, but far more impactful, being on a commercial scale.

As neighbors, we are very supportive of the Virginia Robinson's Gardens and their mission to expose all city dwellers, especially inner-city children, to nature.

However, we believe that there will be a number of impacts from the Expansion of Hours, Events and additional people visiting the Virginia Robinson Gardens. During their current events, the burden on the neighborhood is severe, and for a few times a year, we have been willing to look the other way. But the proposed expansions will permanently alter our way of life. As Councilmember Gold put it recently "everybody is entitled to the quiet enjoyment of their homes," and if this expansion proceeds as the County wishes, we will be denied that right.

The Gardens are proposing 200 visitors a day (currently 100), Seven days a week, including Holidays (currently Monday-Friday), Hours of 9:30 am to Sunset (currently 9am-4pm) and 24 events a year to include filming, Weddings, family ceremonies, meetings, seminars and classes (currently up to 4 events, subject to BH event restrictions).

	<b>1980</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2021 Proposal</b>
<i>Days Open to Public</i>	4 days/ week Tues-Fri Holidays: Closed	5 days/week, Tues – Sat. Open on Holidays, except Christmas and New Years	<b><i>Seven Days a Week No Holiday Closures</i></b>
<i>Hours</i>	9:30 AM – 3:30 PM	9:30 – 5:30 AM	<b>9:30 AM - Sunset</b>
<i>Attendance Limits/Tours</i>	100 visitors/day With reservations	100 visitor/day With reservations	<b>200 visitors/day</b>
<i>Types of Events</i>	Educational Programing	Public Programs conforming to hours and visitor limits	<b>Existing Events plus private family events such as weddings.</b>
<i>Special Uses</i>	2/Year Patron Party Garden Tour No Attendance Limits	4/year Garden Tour (2 consecutive days)	<b>24/year</b>
<i>Parking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Limited to 20 spaces onsite</li><li>No Street Parking</li><li>No Walk-ins</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Onsite parking only</li><li>No street parking</li><li>Walk-ins allowed</li></ul>	<b>No restrictions indicated</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Drop-offs</li> </ul>		
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## FIRE

Our neighborhood has recently been designated a Fire hazard area, with signs being posted throughout the neighborhood.

Palm trees have been identified as very susceptible to fire, with the embers from palm trees being capable of blowing large distances. The VR Gardens has an extensive grove of palm trees. Additional visitors could increase the risk of fire.

And neighbors have recounted that during Garden events, roads and driveways have been blocked by guest and “Party Van” parking.

I believe a fire engine is too large to enter the Gardens. Is there a dedicated fire hydrant within the Garden? Sometimes people park in front of fire hydrants on the street. Since the property is owned by the County, who will respond to fires? Will a slow response time from the County or an inability of a fire truck to enter the Gardens put our neighborhood at risk for fire?

## SAFETY

Currently, we do not see the Beverly Hills Police patrolling our neighborhood on a regular basis to prevent personal injury or property damage. How will be protected from additional people entering our neighborhood to attend events at the Gardens? How will emergency vehicles get through crowded streets?

## TRANSPORTATION/ TRAFFIC

We already have a very busy neighborhood during the week.

Several large construction projects for private residences which will take years to complete have been permitted in the area. This brings construction trucks and workers to the area.

The city has also allowed the contractors for repaving the streets to set up along Lexington, taking up parking for their equipment along the street and moving equipment along Lexington.



We all have large homes which require regular maintenance- gardening, pool, housekeeping and construction maintenance. These trucks and vehicles park on our streets.

Hartford Way is a primary access road to Benedict Canyon and already there is a long line of cars lined up along Hartford early afternoon and evening to turn right on Benedict Canyon.

The County wants to add an additional 100 visitors to the VR Gardens A DAY, which will be a burden to an already busy neighborhood. There is no public transportation close enough to the Gardens, so they will drive, adding to the traffic.

## PARKING

Add the parking of all the construction vehicles for new private homes, contractors for street paving, vehicles for maintenance of existing homes and our neighborhood parking is already crowded.

The Gardens has only 31 parking spaces- 25 for visitors accessed on Elden Way and 6 for staff accessed on Cove Way. The County is asking for a total number of visitors of 200 a day. The county has conceded that their visitors will park on the nearby resident streets. We are expected to bear the brunt of twice as many visitors per day as well as the commercial scale wedding, etc events.

On-street parking is limited. There is no parking on Elden Way for VR Gardens, Crescent and several other streets have a 2-hour limit, so many of the remaining streets are chock full of vehicles seeking to park.

Events at VR Gardens would pose a special problem- valet parking for the guests would occupy all the side streets and event trucks for set up and delivery would also be a burden.

## NOISE

The County proposes that the VR Gardens be open every day, including Sundays and Holidays. They also seek to increase the hours and the special events from 4 to 24 events a year, including turning the Gardens into a Wedding Venue.

This is a very quiet neighborhood, especially in the evening. Residents realize that noise really carries here, so they are especially respectful about parties. Evening events at the VR Gardens would pose a special hardship on the neighborhood.

On weekends (especially Sundays and Holidays) the neighborhood is very quiet. It is the one respite we all have from the busy noise of the weekdays. Sunday visitors would impact the neighborhood a lot.

## AIR QUALITY GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Additional people, events would add to poor air quality

## SUPERVISION

Currently, Events (up to 4 per year) are allowed at the Garden subject to Beverly Hills event restrictions. The new proposed events (up to 24 a year)- or about one every other week! Who will supervise?

Who will respond to emergencies? Who will police, respond to fires and generally deal with any disruption from noise, parking or emergency health issues?

## WATER

Since we are in a drought and conserving water, the Gardens are already a huge user of water. More visitors and more events will use up even more water at the Gardens.

## LIGHTING

Currently, there is limited outdoor lighting at the Gardens. With increased events at night, there will need to be additional lighting installed for safety reasons.

## WILDLIFE

Currently, we have birds and small animals, squirrels, etc., in our neighborhood who come out on the quiet weekend days and in the evenings. How will additional visitors and additional events, impact the wildlife of the Gardens and the surrounding neighborhood?

## HISORICAL RESOURCES

The VR Gardens are a jewel box, already requiring a lot of maintenance. How will this increase in visitors and events affect the degree of maintenance at the Gardens.

Also, the mission of the Gardens is to educate and expose a wide range of visitors to nature. How is turning the Gardens into a filming or Wedding venue for

commercial gain part of the mission of the Gardens? We believe that with the new changes proposed by the County, the Gardens are being used for money-making ventures, not for their true mission. And all at the residents expense.

We ask that the Council take a position either in opposition to this expansion, or requiring a significant scale down. Your residents need serious mitigation measures put in place. While this expansion will benefit the County, we fail to see the benefits to the residents who live there. Or the City for that matter. This puts a financial burden on the City with code enforcement, perhaps emergency services, etc but with the financial benefits going to the County.

This proposal not only burdens us by impacting our way of life, it poses a health and safety concern. During their current events, driveways and streets are often blocked off due to errant parking by visitors. Emergency vehicles may be blocked from accessing certain areas. Who will be legally responsible if that occurs?

We would like to respectfully request the following:

- The Council take a position either in opposition to this expansion, or with a view to scaling it back significantly and imposing mitigation measures
- An ad hoc committee of 2 City Council members as occurred with the Basement Ordinance (where one City Council member had to recuse)
- Suggestions of **requiring** the Gardens to secure offsite parking lots and shuttle buses
- **Requiring** their valets to park in the offsite parking (not the residential areas)
- **Requiring and have the Gardens** pay for the hiring of an extra code enforcement officer
  - o Or overtime of current officers

As the County does not appear receptive to our concerns, we need the Council to stand up for your residents.

Yours Sincerely,

Kathy Checchi	█████ Cove Way
Alfred Checchi	█████ Cove Way

Arnold Messer	█████ Cove Way
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Sharon Messer	████ Cove Way
Patricia Wittenberg	████ Carolyn Way
Armin Wittenberg	████ Carolyn Way
Robin Hwajin Yoon Kim	████ Elden Way
Elizabeth Seri Kim	████ Elden Way
Andrew Young Kim	████ Elden Way
Madeline Kim	████ Elden Way
Chuck Alpert	████ Carolyn Way
Jodi Stine	████ Cove Way
Don Stine	████ Cove Way
Antony Spencer	████ Carolyn Way
Laurie Spencer	████ Carolyn Way
Robert Wood	████ Laurel Way
Michael Weiner	████ Carolyn Way
Michelle Weiner	████ Carolyn Way

**████████ Carolyn Way  
Beverly Hills  
California 90210**

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Timmi Tway  
City of Beverly Hills  
455 N Rexford Dr  
Beverly Hills  
California 90210

7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear City Council Members,

**RE: Proposed Supplemental Environmental Impact Report  
Increased usage of Virginia Robinson Gardens, Beverley Hills**

I am completely opposed to any expansion of the current scope of operations, which is absolutely inappropriate in a quiet residential area.

I have lived for approximately 8 years with my wife close to Virginia Robinson Gardens, at ██████████ Carolyn Way. I am therefore very well aware that this is a quiet residential neighbourhood, rich in nature, and with a road network that has only a limited capacity to carry traffic and to support parking. Virginia Robinson Gardens is a pleasant oasis, set deep within the residential area.

What is proposed is a considerable increase in activity, which will be to the total detriment of the residents who live in the area. Residents are already severely impacted under the current conditions, and I am completely opposed to any further increases in use.

The proposal seeks that there should be a doubling of daily visitors, a 6-fold increase in events, and an extension of activities from 4pm to sunset (which is 8.10pm in mid-summer). This is totally unreasonable.

Your current concern is the scope of the SEIR. I advocate that this should focus upon:

- Noise; primarily the noise arising from events, especially amplified music and speech, and especially outside the main working day, when residents are entitled to expect quiet enjoyment of their homes. The assessment should include ambient noise readings taken in the evening in a variety of conditions, and predictions spanning the wide range of event types that are envisaged.

- Transportation/traffic; particularly how parking of vehicles is to be accommodated without causing environmental damage. It is particularly important that the assessment considers staff and contractors' vehicles as well as the vehicles of those attending events.
- There should be an assessment by speaking to the nearby neighbors that seeks to understand just how impactful the current situation is. Multiple neighbors report cars routinely blocking access to their homes, event cars and truck parking on Elden Way in violation of the rules, etc. This is a health and safety issue that must be explored to the fullest. And that means speaking to those who live nearby.
- Air quality/greenhouse gas emissions; since all users of the site are likely to arrive and depart by motor vehicle, it is clear that this is not a sustainable location for commercial activity of the type proposed. The assessment should take into account drivers having to cruise around the area in search of parking, and performing manoeuvres in order to park in constricted spaces.
- Urban character; noting that what is proposed is a high degree of commercial activity in the midst of a quiet residential area with a very distinct character.
- The other issues you identify (namely energy and historical resources are important too.

I shall be grateful if you will keep me informed of your progress, and also ensure that I am notified of further opportunities to comment upon what is proposed.

Yours sincerely,

Antony Spencer & Laurie Spencer

## PROJECT NOTE

DOCUMENT CONTROL			
<b>DOCUMENT TITLE</b>	VIRGINIA ROBERTS GARDEN (VRG)	<b>REVISION</b>	R00
<b>DOCUMENT NUMBER</b>	0051346-0820-0	<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	7 <sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021
<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	INCREASED USAGE OF VRG - NOISE	<b>AUTHOR</b>	DANI FIUMICELLI
<b>STATUS</b>	ISSUE	<b>CHECKED</b>	JS
<b>ISSUED TO</b>	ANTONY SPENCER	<b>PASSED</b>	DB

### INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Project Note provides comments regarding the noise issues associated with the proposed Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the increased usage of Virginia Robinson Gardens, ■■■■ Carolyn Way, Beverley Hills, CA (VRG).

### UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROPOSAL

- 1.2. It is understood that the proposed changes to the use of the VRG will mean a considerable increase in activity with a doubling of daily visitors, a 6-fold increase in events, including use of amplified sound, and an extension of activities from 4pm to sunset (which is understood to be in the mid-evening around 8.00 pm in mid-summer), with associated increases in vehicular traffic to and from the VRG.

### BASELINE BACKGROUND NOISE LEVELS AND AMBIENT SOUNDSCAPE

- 1.3. The effect of noise on people and the use of their homes not only depends on how loud the noise is in terms of noise level, and any relevant regulatory controls; but also, how the noise in question relates to existing background noise levels and the ambient soundscape.
- 1.4. For example, this would include considering the following:
- What might be the difference between representative background noise levels at outdoor amenity spaces at residential properties and the predicted noise from VRG? and,

- What might be the increase in noise level at outdoor amenity spaces at residential properties due to the predicted noise from VRG? and,
- Does the noise from VRG contain characteristics that increase its impact? For example, the low frequency bass thump of modern amplified music and the information content of amplified speech mean that the noise has a greater impact compared to the relatively anonymous sound such as steady traffic noise from busy but distant highways.
- How might the noise from VRG contrast or blend with the existing soundscape at outdoor amenity spaces at residential properties? i.e. how congruous will the noise from VRG be in the context of the existing sounds making up soundscape in the area.

- 1.5. Consequently, any noise assessment for the SEIR should include a comprehensive baseline noise survey and observations of the soundscape at locations representative of residential properties around the VRG.
- 1.6. Background noise levels and the ambient soundscape typically vary depending on the time of the day, evening or night, between weekdays and weekends day of the week, and with the weather conditions.
- 1.7. Therefore, any baseline survey should be sufficiently long enough to capture sufficient data so that outliers and anomalous values can be rejected and there remain enough values to be able to understand the variability of the baseline noise levels through day, evening and night periods and use statistical analysis to establish representative background noise levels and observations of the ambient soundscape.
- 1.8. Typically, this requires continual monitoring for 15 minute periods over a minimum of a 7 day period to be able to capture sufficient data to understand and manage the associated uncertainties so that any derived background noise levels and ambient soundscape observations can be confidently relied upon.

## SPATIAL EXTENT OF THE NOISE ASSESSMENT FOR THE SEIR

- 1.9. The district around VRG is almost exclusively residential in character with correspondingly relatively quiet background noise levels and a tranquil ambient soundscape. Noise will



therefore not decay to below background noise levels or stop being incongruous in the context of the ambient soundscape until it has travelled some distance from the VRG.

- 1.10. Consequently, intensification of existing and introduction of more noise generating activities at the VRG has potential to cause disturbance and disruption to not only residents of properties adjacent to the VRG but also those some distance from the premises.
- 1.11. It is therefore suggested that the spatial extent of the noise assessment should be carefully considered and a distance of 750 feet from the boundary of the VRG is considered a likely minimum.

## SOURCES OF NOISE

- 1.12. The main sources of noise associated with the proposed changes to the use of VRG that should be included in the SEIR include the following:
- Amplified music and speech
  - Crowds
  - Traffic
  - Miscellaneous e.g. temporary plant installations such a generators or refrigeration equipment for catering, and fireworks.

## NOISE PREDICTIONS

- 1.13. Assessment of the noise from the proposed increased use of the VRG will be dependent on theoretical prediction of noise propagation.
- 1.14. There are several methods of predicting the propagation of noise e.g. ISO 9613 is a common method.
- 1.15. Whatever method is used to predict noise levels from the VRG it should include the following parameters that influence the propagation of noise
- Robust source levels i.e. the sound power and frequency spectrum of the source should be realistic and verifiable.
  - The effect of distance (geometric spreading).

- Source directivity characteristics.
- Source emission characteristics e.g. some Public Address system (PAs) propagate as a line source at a lower rate of decay before the decay increases to that of a point source at a faster rate.
- The effects of topography and buildings acting as barriers to the propagation of noise
- Ground absorption.
- Air absorption.
- Relative humidity and temperature.
- Meteorological conditions e.g. wind direction.
- Acoustic reflections other than from the ground.

## NOISE PREDICTION VERIFICATION

- 1.16. Whilst the prediction of the noise from VRG will be a starting point in the noise assessment for the SEIR, there will be the opportunity to verify the predictions from amplified sound by installing a temporary PA at the VGR and carrying out noise propagation tests.
- 1.17. Such a test would involve temporary installation of a PA configured in a way typical of likely an event at VGR and playing test examples of sound at various levels, whilst simultaneously measuring at a reference point at the VRG e.g. the sound mixing/control point at VRG, and at representative residential locations at various distances around the VRG.
- 1.18. The propagation test would provide real world empirical data directly relevant to the VRG and surrounding locations that could be used to verify the noise predictions and reduce the inevitable uncertainties associated with theoretical prediction of noise propagation so that, they could be more confidently relied upon in the noise assessment in the SEIR.

## SUMMARY

- 1.19. Noise from the proposed changes and intensification of use of the VGR has the potential to cause significant adverse effects to people living at and using residential properties adjacent to and some distance from the VGR.

- 1.20. As well as considering regulatory requirements, the assessment of the noise in the SEIR from the proposed changes at VGR should include a comprehensive baseline noise survey to establish representative background noise levels and ambient sound conditions in outdoor amenity spaces at residential properties adjacent too, and to at least 750 feet from, the perimeter of the VGR.
- 1.21. The assessment of the impact of noise from the VGR should include evaluation against regulatory requirements, and of the difference between the noise from VGR and baseline noise, the increase in noise levels compared to existing conditions, allow for any acoustic characteristics that might enhance the impact of the noise, and evaluate how congruous the noise will be with the existing soundscape.
- 1.22. The sources of noise included in the SEIR assessment should include all those likely to be audible beyond the boundary of the VGR.
- 1.23. The prediction of the propagation of noise from sources at the VGR should be based on reliable source data and include relevant factors that influence propagation of noise outdoors.
- 1.24. Predictions of amplified noise should be verified by a propagation test using a temporarily installed PA and simultaneous measurements at the VGR and various representative residential properties adjacent to and at multiple distances from the premises.

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Registered in England 05666276



## **VANGUARDIA LIMITED**

### **LONDON OFFICE**

The Ministry  
79-81 Borough Road  
London SE1 1DN

### **MANCHESTER OFFICE**

Jactin House  
24 Hood Street  
Manchester M4 6WX

### **HEAD OFFICE**

21 Station Road West, Oxted  
Surrey RH8 9EE

Tel +44 (0) 1883 718690

office@vanguardia.co.uk  
**vanguardia.co.uk**

Dear Ms. Chien-

The LA County Parks and Recreation is proposing an expansion to the Virginia Robinson Gardens (the Gardens). Under their proposal, 73,000 people a year will come into our residential neighborhood and 24 events will be held. We already feel the impact of the 5,000 visitors a year and 4 events.

The County states their objectives as increasing equal access to the Gardens and for the Special Events, raising money for the Gardens.

**These objectives could be fully accomplished without changing any of the operations at the Gardens.**

**We ask that the Final SEIR include an answer to the issues raised below.**

#### **INCREASED HOURS AT THE GARDENS**

The County says that it would like to increase access to the Gardens. The neighbors fully support this objective, especially Garden tours for school age children. This objective could be accomplished within the current hours 9-4 Monday-Friday, since that is the time that school children would visit.

Why hasn't the County facilitated more of these school visits? They have run the Gardens since 1977, but according to the website only about 5% of their programming is for kids. Is it a matter of outreach? What has the County done on outreach?

The County says that keeping the Gardens open until sunset during the school year would allow parents to bring their children to the Gardens after school. Every parent knows that after school, kids need a snack and the ability to run around and exercise. The Gardens have no area for play structures or sports and no food service. There is a kid friendly parks very close- Coldwater Canyon Park. There is also Roxbury Park and Rancho Park, which has tennis courts, a golf course and playing fields. Descanso Gardens has a train and café.

The County proposes to have the Gardens open every day of the year until sunset, including Sundays and Holidays. Who will staff these increased hours? Currently, the Gardens are staffed by volunteers, but will volunteers be willing to give their time until 8 pm at night, on weekends and Holidays?

The County wants the Gardens open on Sundays and Holidays so that there is equal access, but the Gardens are currently open on Saturday. What are the numbers of people who come on Saturday? What area of the County do they come from? The County has years of data but provides none in the SEIR. There should be data in the final SEIR.

**Increased hours do not automatically mean increased access.**

#### **THE SPECIAL EVENTS WILL RAISE MONEY FOR THE GARDENS**

The County is proposing 24 Special Events, including Weddings, family ceremonies, etc. primarily to raise money for the Gardens.

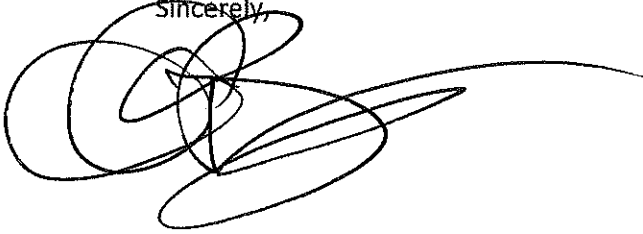
The County does not disclose any financial information, projections or analysis to support that Special Events are profitable for them. By increasing the hours and increasing the number of Special Events there will be increased costs for staff which will offset any profits from renting out the Gardens. The

amount of money charged to rent out the Gardens can only be minimal, (maybe \$1,000-2,000) since there are no tables, chairs, catering facilities included in the cost. Most of the money for Special Events will be paid to the valet parkers, the caterers, and the rental companies. This nominal amount of rent could barely cover staff or wear and tear done by the Events.

The Gardens have recently started charging admission. \$15 for adults, \$11 students and \$6 for children (6-12). This could generate more income than hosting Special Events. Assuming 90% adults and 10% children, the 5,000 people who visited last year would have generated \$70,500 ( $4,500 \times \$15 + 500 \times \$6$ ).

**In conclusion, the objectives of the County could be fully accomplished without changing any of the operations at the Gardens. The Final SEIR needs to look carefully at the assumptions of the County that increasing the hours and number of Special Events at the Gardens does anything to increase access or to raise funds.**

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dear Ms. Chien-

We are writing to express our OPPOSITION to the proposed Operational Changes at the Virginia Robinson Gardens.

The County has said that the reason for these changes is to increase ACCESS.

We are completely in support of expanding the programs for School age children. That could be done Monday-Friday during the current hours.

We believe that the true beneficiaries of the 24 events will be the Friends of the Robinson Gardens. Already they use the Gardens as a private Country Club, offering events and classes to the small group of Friends.

Any events, such as a Wedding, would be very expensive to host. Unlike Descanso Gardens which has indoor facilities, tables and chairs and a dedicated catering facility- the Café- at Robinson Gardens, everything will need to be trucked in and out.

Tables, Chairs

Cooking and catering items

Sound system

Lighting

Dance Floor

Tent

In addition to all these items, there will be staff for set up and take down (all done in City streets, since the Garden has no loading dock). There will be staff for the event and Valet Parking attendants.

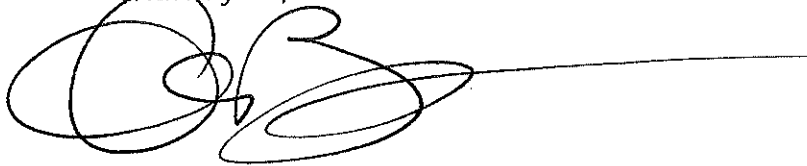
**All of these items will be very expensive.**



And how will the booking of events be determined. Unless there is an equitable and fair booking process, the people connected to the Garden will get granted access, not the public at large.

We believe the only way to be fair and provide access is to keep the Garden open to the public and not allow private parties. It is a Garden, not a commercial venue.

Thank you,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Janice Moreno

Dear Ms. Chien,

We are vehemently opposed to the Virginia Robinson Gardens proposed changes to their operations.

While we are supportive of the Gardens mission, it should not come at our expense.

These changes are outrageous and threaten our right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

The Gardens already disregards the parking laws, and the Elden Way no parking restrictions. They allow visitors and event trucks to take over Elden Way on a regular basis despite that being prohibited, and routinely block resident driveways cutting off access to our homes.

There are times when emergency vehicles would not be able to get through. We do not want to have a tragedy occur because the Gardens were not interested in following safety protocols.

These proposed changes are alarming. They essentially change the Gardens into a commercial venue, and will completely ruin the fabric of our neighborhood.

In the face of resident opposition, the Gardens already expanded outside of their original scope in 2014. This cannot be allowed to happen again, and in fact, perhaps they should be forced to return to the prior original conditions.

While the current situation is bad enough, these changes significantly threaten our safety, our security, and our way of life.

**We respectfully request that the County maintain the hours of the Garden as they are currently and keep the Special Events at 4.**

Yours Sincerely,  
*Scott Ewesko*



9/6/2022

Dear Ms. Chien-

The Virginia Robinson Gardens is located in a residential neighborhood, surrounded by houses on all sides. The only way to enter the Gardens is from a cul de sac on a residential street.

The County is proposing to increase the hours from 9-4 Monday through Saturday to 9- sunset every day of the week, including weekends and Holidays. In addition, the County proposes to open the Gardens to private events 24 times a year.

We are OPPOSED to these hours and private events for the following reasons.

- The traffic in our neighborhood is already very bad, and the Traffic Study was done in February of 2022, before many people returned to commuting to work.

- Other Gardens in the area are not located in residential areas and they have shorter hours. See the hours of Descanso Gardens, LA County Arboreum and Botanical Gardens, Mildred Mathias Botanical Garden and Robert Irwin Central Garden- most of these Gardens close by 5 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

- Staying open until Sunset is not manageable. Sunset is a specific time that changes each day, during the summer it is 7:30 or 8pm. But after sunset is twilight. A time of day where there is still light and that lasts another 60 minutes after that. Don't the neighbors and visitors to the Garden deserve an exact closing time?

- The Events will bring noise, traffic, parking problems and potentially crime to a residential neighborhood. These events will be private, not fundraisers for the Garden and people will attend for other reasons than touring the Garden. This will require increased police presence for parking enforcement and problems.

We ask that for the Final SEIR

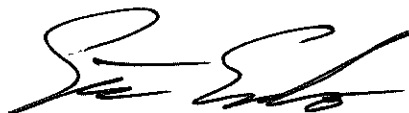
- The traffic study be redone to reflect the current traffic.

- The hours be limited to conform to other Botanical Gardens, having a set time not sunset.

- The Events stay at the current 4 limit for fundraising, not be increased to include 24 Private Parties.

Sincerely,

Scott Ewasko



9/6/2022

Dear Ms. Chien-

We are in favor of continuing and expanding the educational programs for Children at the Virginia Robinson Gardens, but we are strongly opposed to expanding the hours and permitting 24 private events.

The draft SEIR completely ignores the risk of Fire. The Final SEIR must take this important issue into account and retain the 4 private events instead of expanding them to 24.

Fire is ignored in the Draft SEIR. The SEIR states

"There has not been a wildland fire of any significance in Beverly Hills and the last large wildland fire adjacent to the city occurred in Franklin Canyon more than 50 years ago."

This is not true.

What about the Bel Air Fire of 1961, the Getty Fire of 2019 and the fire that occurred recently at 2040N Beverly Drive- less than a mile from the Gardens?

Our neighborhood was designated a Fire Hazard area and there are signs posted on many of our streets.

Also, with the water restrictions in place, our landscaping is drier than it has ever been.

Special Events will mean more people entering the Garden to set up since there are no catering facilities in the Garden. There will be cooking for food prep, lighting and sound system set up- all which could ignite a fire.

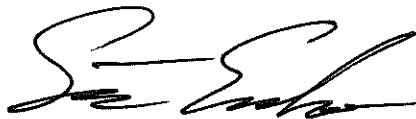
Firetrucks don't fit into the narrow walks of the Garden.

For all these reasons, the Special Events should be limited to 4.

As neighbors, we support the Gardens, but it is not fair or equitable to expose us to Fire risk for our own homes.

Sincerely,

Scott Ewasko



9/6/2022

Sent by Email [jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Dear Ms. Chien,

The hours the County is proposing for the Robinson Gardens are **excessive, especially if you consider that the VRG is in a residential area, surrounded on all sides by private homes.**

**None of the other Gardens are open until Sunset.** Sunset during the summer can be as late as 7:30 or 8 pm and that is when the sun sets. Then there is a period of twilight when it is still light, so people could easily leave later.

### **Virginia Robinson Gardens**

Size	6 acres
Hours	Currently 9-4 Monday-Saturday/ Proposed 9- sunset Every Day
Parking	35 spaces
Surrounding area	completely residential on all sides
Hosted events	Currently 4/ Proposed 24

To have an event at the VRG, it must be outside and everything needs to be trucked in by delivery trucks- tables, chairs, a tent, cooking facilities, lighting, sound system dance floor and even restrooms, since during the large events, the house is closed. All these trucks must unload in the Elden Way Cul de sac since large trucks don't fit in the driveway of the VRG.

The County compares the VRG to Descanso Gardens but that's not an accurate comparison because Descanso is much larger, has ample free parking and its own food service, multiple indoor facilities, and restrooms.

### **Descanso Gardens**

Size	150 acres
Hours	Mon-Friday 9-7 summer, 9-5 winter Sat/Sunday 9-5
Parking	800 spaces
Surrounding Area	Major highway on one border, residential on others

Hosted Events Yes, but requirement to use the Descanso Café for all catering

**The VRG should be compared to similar smaller botanical gardens.**

**UCLA Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden**

Size	7.5 acres
Hours	Mon-Fri 8-5, Sat-Sun 9-5
Parking	Paid parking at UCLA parking structure
Surrounding Area	Part of UCLA campus
Hosted Events	None

**The Japanese Garden, Sepulveda Basin, Van Nuys**

Size	6.5 acres
Hours	Mon-Thurs 10-3:30
Parking	Very limited parking. Website says “come by mass transit”
Surrounding Area	Part of Woodley Park and Rec Center
Hosted Events	Ceremonial Weddings No receptions. Event must complete prior to dusk

**The Garden of the World, Thousand Oaks**

Size	4.5 acres
Hours	9-5 Tues-Sat. Closed Sun/Mon/Holidays
Parking	Limited site parking
Surrounding Area	Commercial downtown area
Hosted Events	None

**James Irvine Japanese Garden**

Size	Less than an acre
Hours	Tues-Sun 10-5

Parking                      2 minute walk- 5 floor parking structure  
Surrounding Area        Commercial, Little Tokyo  
Hosted Events Inside at the Japanese American Cultural Center

**We respectfully submit that the Draft SEIR is inaccurate and incomplete in its comparison of the VRG with Descanso Gardens. It is more accurate to look at Gardens similar to VRG in terms of hours, days open and hosted events.**

**We also respectfully submit that the Draft SEIR incorrectly analyses the effect of an event at the VRG, since everything needs to be trucked into the VRG- unloaded and reloaded – on City streets, the day before and the day after events, essentially disrupting the neighborhood for 3 days each event. There is no discussion of this at all.**

Thank you,

Kathy Checchi [REDACTED] Cove Way

Michael McAllister- [REDACTED] Cove Way, [REDACTED] Carolyn Way

Honorable Mayor Bosse and members of city council

City of Beverly Hills

455 North Rexford

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Honorable Mayor Bosse and City Council members:

The Harry and Virginia Robinson Estate, currently known as “The Virginia Robison Gardens (VRG),” was built in 1911, predating the incorporation of the City of Beverly Hills by two years. During its 66-year tenure as a private estate, the Robinson family built the foundation for what eventually became Beverly Hills. The Robinsons’ traveled the world with a botanist and collected rare and beautiful plants that still thrive on the 6.2-acre garden and in other parts of the city where they were introduced. The estate was used extensively by the Robinson’s to entertain studio heads and legends of the silver screen. Likewise, they brought together heads of state and major players of corporate America. This was done in the spirit of benefiting the growth and development of society, with an emphasis on gentility and promoting philanthropic endeavors to benefit a global community. Furthermore, the underlining intent was to promote “fine living” and the advancement of the visual and performing arts.

Today as a public entity, programs echo the spirit of the family’s intent when it was deeded to the county as a house museum and botanical garden. The county, as the stewards of this historic property, not only have deeply invested in the estate’s physical restoration as a historic display garden and house museum, but have emulated the spirit of the family to build a strong community, while emphasizing the necessity to respect the past while embracing the future.

The Robinson Gardens benefits the community, including the immediate neighbors, by providing green space, resulting in positive gains in home values. For many local residences, it provides opportunities to volunteer as docents and participate in the many programs offered at VRG. One of the largest beneficiaries of this green oasis are the 2,000 elementary children, who annually visit the estate. While visiting the garden, they learn from trained docents about the value of a healthy eco-systems and the practice of planting and caring for vegetable gardens and the concept of eating wholesome-unprocessed, healthy food.

After the last expansion of the Supplemental Environment Impact Review (SEIR) in 2014, the Gardens hosted many additional events for both youth and adults. As the Superintendent of the VRG from 1997 – 2002, I witnessed a steadfast commitment to respect the integrity of the neighborhood by developing and implementing an extensive list of “Good Neighbor Policies.” These policies were reviewed and refined after each event, reacting to any concerns from the neighbors and event participants. Additionally, the county operates the venue following the Department of Interiors guidelines for Historic Buildings to further protect the historic narrative and integrity of the living and non-living collections.

The County Parks Department staff learned how to manage traffic and noise after the first expansion of the EIR in 2014, and are now poised and ready to remain sensible and responsible in executing the



greater use of the property as proposed in the new SEIR. The proposed changes provide greater accessibility by offering longer hours and more open days. If adopted, this operational model will align VRG with Descanso Gardens, in La Canada Flintridge, CA and The Huntington Gardens in San Marino, CA, both of which successfully operate in the center of residential neighborhoods, much like VRG.

Please support the proposed operational changes to VRG to allow greater accessibility to the house museum and gardens, allowing this national asset to be shared with all those who wish to experience its magic and grandeur. This is exactly what the Robinson family intended when they gifted their estate to the public in perpetuity to be operated as a house museum and botanic garden.

Most respectfully,

Mr. Tim Lindsay, Superintendent Emeritus

San Gabriel, CA 91775

Dear Ms. Chien-

The Operational Changes that LA County is proposing to the Virginia Robinson Gardens are **completely contrary** to the intent of the original Donor, Mrs. Virginia Robinson, and the 2014 SEIR.

### **Donor's Intent**

When Mrs. Robinson deeded the Garden to LA County it was for a very specific purpose. It was to be used as “an arboretum or botanical garden and for no other purpose inconsistent with said use.”

Mrs. Robinson specifically provided that

“No business for profit shall ever be conducted on said property but the same shall at all times be open and available for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public as an arboretum.”

In fact, Mrs. Robinson felt so strongly about this use that she provided that if the provisions of the Grant Deed were breached or violated “title to the whole of said real property shall immediately vest in the City of Beverly Hills.”

### **2014 SEIR**

Likewise, the 2014 SEIR limited the way in which the Gardens could be used.

**“Public Programs to conform to new day/hours and number of participants allowed; however, subject matter for seminar/classes to be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent based on how well the classes interpret the historical collections at the facility. Also, include tours for biology, botany and horticulture groups.”**

These are very specific programs geared toward the historical collections at the Gardens and the subject matter which relates to the Gardens.

Likewise, the Special Uses were very specific.

**Special Uses limited to four (4) per year with expanded theme to include, but not limited to:**

- **Extend Garden Tour to two consecutive days to allow greater overall attendance**

- Offer public tour in the evening with a meal served with or without tables
- Offer public tour for donors during daylight hours featuring seasonal aspects of the garden or recent restoration projects.
- Offer performing arts in the garden, such as classical music, theatre or poetry readings

For special uses, theme would be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent.  
Programs must continue to focus on the historical interpretation of the facility, such as the non-living and living collections housed at the facility, the gardens, etc.

-

### Current Draft SEIR

The current SEIR completely disregards the Donor's intent AND the prior uses specified by the 2014 SEIR. LA County now seeks to essentially turn the Gardens into a commercial enterprise, renting out the Gardens for Weddings, and other private parties.

The Revised Notice from the County incorrectly describes the existing types of Events to include

- Offer children's programs
- Schedule staff and public programming such as temporary exhibits, health and physical fitness activities, painting, wine, and cooking classes, etc.
- Institute subsidized musical performing arts programs and movie screenings
- Subject matter for events to be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Additionally, for the County to describe these as "existing events" **is actually false and misleading. Any person reading this notice would think that these events are authorized.**

This is definitely a larger scope of activities than is described in the 2014 SEIR. Why doesn't this match the language of the 2014 SEIR? Because the Friends of the Robinson Garden are already violating the provisions of the Grant Deed and the 2014 SEIR. They use this Garden as their own private Country Club instead of honoring the Gardens and preserving them. Take a look at the Website and you will see that many other activities are offered which are completely unrelated to the Garden's mission- yoga, book clubs on history, LA architecture, the

experiences of a Pan Am flight Attendant, Art fakes, frauds and forgeries- all unrelated to the mission of the Gardens.

The Friends are currently operating the Gardens outside the scope of the 2014 SEIR and the Grant Deed of Virginia Robinson. The new items proposed, especially the 24 Special Use events will really be for this select group of people, not the General Public, as required by the Grant Deed.

**Why is the County allowing this unauthorized use?**

The Donor and the 2014 SEIR recognized the limitations of the facility. It is a Garden, not a commercial venue. The new events described in the Draft SEIR will do damage to the Gardens because there are no catering facilities, tables, chairs, dance floor, lighting- all these items will need to be trucked into the Gardens. The wear and tear on the Gardens will adversely affect the Gardens.

Currently, the Garden hosts 5,000 people a year or about 20 people a day. Under the Draft SEIR, there will be 73,000 people a year PLUS unlimited guests for 24 separate events. Again, the Gardens cannot sustain this much traffic.

**We ask the County to look at the Donor Intent and the current SEIR. The County should be required to give accurate and truthful information in its Notice. The County should honor the Donor's intent, preserve the Gardens and not put them at risk If the County can't do this, they should turn the Gardens over to the City of Beverly Hills.**

Sincerely,

Masud Hakim

██████ Elden Way

Kathy and Al Checchi

██████ Cove Way

Dear Ms Chien,

I am a legislative advocate working on behalf of Kathy Checchi.

I am also a resident activist who fought for many years to protect my home in the hillside of Beverly Hills, as well as the whole hillside area from overdevelopment.

The proposed expansion, the expansion requests, and the manner by which the County analyzes and presents data seem very one-sided data and minimize or dismiss the neighbors' concerns.

While this behavior might be expected of a developer, it is not what one should be expecting from what is supposed to be an open, balanced governmental process.

All of Ms Checchi's group of 35 nearby neighbors live in the immediate area, on 11 different streets, and some are Friends of the Gardens. Ms Checchi and her neighbors agree that the Gardens are a wonderful resource, and that the Friends charitable work is valuable. But they do not support the commercial aspects of the Gardens, and they certainly do not support the expansion of such commercial activities.

They moved into a residential neighborhood, not a commercial one.

There is strong evidence to support that the majority of the programs currently being run out of the Gardens has very little to do with education and are instead county club like activities which are often private members only, and and/or charge quite a bit (in excess of \$100) to attend.

Research by neighbors uncovered:

- Per Charity Navigator, based on available IRS 990 forms, the Friends spend about 1/3 of the money they raise on "administration costs."
- Of the program expenses, the Friends only spent 5% on education which included not just school education, but public education and education of the Friends.
- School Education is the smallest portion of Gardens activities per anecdotal reports from Garden docents.
- The Gardens are closed to the public for the months of May and September
- The educational access for children is dwarfed by the number of country club type of events held.
- There have been multiple events selling items such as high-end jewelry and perfume, and a plethora of private member only parties.

There is quite strong evidence that the current activities of the Gardens are in violation of the terms of the Grant Deed, and are also in violation of the 2014 terms, much less the proposed expansion.

The majority of the letters and speeches in support of the expansion parroted the bullet points of the Gardens email without much analysis. I think this gives a false picture of support. Many of the supporters talked about the increased public access without seeming to know the current situation.

I am also concerned that the Gardens call to action emails that spurred many of these letters contained information that was misleading. For example, comparing the Gardens to Descanso Gardens which is 25 times larger, where weddings could be located well away from any nearby neighbors, is simply not a like

for like comparison. And the email also fails to inform the public about the correct terms of the 2014 agreement, mention the claims of the violation of the terms of the Grant Deeds and the other points mentioned above.

For example, in the City Council hearing, one of the Friends was asked specific questions about the financing, and she claimed she didn't have it to hand, and abruptly ended her speech.

I wonder how many of the supporters live in the immediate area. It feels very unjust that people not impacted by these changes might be able to impose them upon these residents. Would these people want to live next door to a commercial venue? Would they want the increased fire risk to their homes?

Increased access can easily be achieved without any changes to the current operations. The Gardens can open for the two months they are closed to the public. The perfume type parties can be eliminated and educational events hosted in their place instead.

Is the *"Of the program expenses, the Friends only spent 5% on education which included not just school education, but public education and education of the Friends"* correct? The public deserves to know what this percentage is, and this should be a significant talking point during these deliberations.

Please consider this a formal request for this analysis to be presented at the public hearing, and that the Gardens emails it to their supporters so that they receive accurate, balanced information from which to form their opinions.

We may find that if some of these supporters knew how few resources were currently being devoted to the educational aspect, they might have a different point of view.

The nearby residents moved into a residential neighborhood, not a commercial one. If anything, the current Commercial activities should be curtailed, not increased.

We ask that you analyze the data. We ask that you explore other ways to increase access without any of these proposed changes. And we request that in depth studies by independent experts analyze the fire, noise, and other risks to the neighborhood be conducted.

If the concern is the financial viability of the Gardens, educational programs, and public access, and if the City of Beverly Hills is willing to take over the Gardens and solve these issues, then what is stopping the County from returning the Gardens to them?

Yours Sincerely,

Debbie Weiss

Dear Ms. Chien,

I reviewed the Grant Deed and the 2014 agreement and compared them to what I saw on the Virginia Gardens website (<https://www.robinsongardens.org>). There are many instances of commercialization and other use violations.

It is my position that the recent uses for the Gardens do not abide by the stipulations made in the Grant Deed or the 2014 agreement. In fact, it appears that the 2014 Agreement allows for uses in contradiction to the Grant Deed.

For example, the 2014 agreement allows for commercial filming, yet in the Grant Deed Pg 2 #4 *"no business for profit should ever be conducted on said property."*

If you look through the website, and the monthly newsletters tab from January 2021- November 2021, some themes emerge.

- 1- Very little attention is given to the underserved children component of the Gardens. I could only find one picture
- 2- A plethora of pictures are available of fancy luncheons, book clubs, and other such events referencing very high-end food, champagne, etc. in a very product placement type manner
- 3- Numerous mentions of vendors and the selling of items. Including a very telling quote of an "unexpected donation" from the proceeds of an on-site book signing.
- 4- The Gardens were to be for the *"benefit and enjoyment of the general public as an arboretum garden"* (Grant Deed #4). There are multiple references to private, member only events.

The Gardens does offer educational opportunities to children- the site mentioned serving 2000 children a year- or 20 days worth if you factor in their max attendance of 100 per day, and did offer a remote program that seemed to serve 3000-4000 children. What happens the other 345 days a year?

However, this is dwarfed by what appears to be essentially a country club for the benefit of the Friends and their friends. There are numerous events that appear to have nothing to do with the terms of the Grant Deed nor the 2014 agreement. And the website routinely promotes high end designers, restaurants, jewelry vendors, perfume vendors, etc. There are a large amount of references to high end food such as Spagos, Cartier champagne, etc. The site is awash with photos that look as if they are taken from high society magazines.

## **Children Education**

Tours are limited to Monday – Friday 10 am – 12:30 pm and the website says they served 2000 children this way. They also started a remote program that is said to have served 3000-4000 students.

They appear to have one annual Science Fair in the spring.

Please note the limited times here of 2 ½ hours during weekdays, versus the virtually wide-open calendar for the wide-ranging events the Friends attend.

# Children's Onsite Program

Virginia Robinson Gardens (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) offers a fun, interactive science-based learning experience for elementary school students, grades 3-5. Children will learn by finding, identifying, tasting and smelling plants they discover in one of our six botanical gardens. They will then have an opportunity to examine these plant species under a microscope and learn how to cultivate and nurture these plants in a garden of their very own.

Our program complements the California State guidelines for science education, and field trips to the Robinson Gardens have been approved by the Los Angeles Unified School District. The goal of the program is to increase children's knowledge about botany, ecology and conservation, as well as motivate kids to eat healthier foods by teaching them where their food comes from and how it's grown in nature.

Student field trips are led by trained docents who are able to foster a child's curiosity and are able to provide an exciting, exploratory learning experience. We are able to accommodate up to 42 students with 4 adult chaperones. Tours are offered Monday through Friday from 10:00AM to 12:30PM with an advanced reservation. Admission is free for qualified private and public schools and transportation is available for qualifying Title 1 schools. The tour concludes with a souvenir for each student: a gift bag and a seedling that they will have planted.

Advance reservations are required for all field trips (we commonly book a school-year ahead!). If you are interested in having your child's class visit Virginia Robinson Gardens, please have your school contact April Walton at [awalton@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:awalton@parks.lacounty.gov) or 310-550-2040.

**Due to COVID-19, on-site school programs are currently pending.**

- Virginia Robinson Gardens is listed as an approved field trip for the Los Angeles Unified School District for grades 3-5.
- Admission is free for qualified private and public school organized field trips.
- Transportation is available, and free if school qualifies as Title 1.
- Advanced reservations are necessary with a short application to complete.
- Docent led tours for children are available throughout the year.
- Tours are offered Monday through Friday from 10:30am to 12:30pm.

Following Virginia Robinson's legacy of serving children of the community, the Friends had a Children's Science Program, bringing over 2,000 schoolchildren from the 2nd to the 4th grades to the Gardens for docent-led children's science tours each year. These tours covered topics such as photosynthesis, pollination, composting, the difference between fruits and vegetables, and many more science-based topics.

4

## The Children's Science Fair



Our annual, spring Science Fair brings young people from local residential treatment programs to the gardens for a fun day of exploration and learning. It is a day that celebrates the earth and demonstrates support for environmental awareness through discussions on water conservation, recycling, saving energy and food sources. The children, ages 6-16, tour the grounds, venturing into the gourmet garden and visiting the chickens in our very own *Poulet Palace*. They take a stroll down to the Wildlife Pond and journey through the largest collection of King Palms in North America. All the while, they are learning about the environment and their part in protecting the earth and making it a better place.

Following the tour, the kids are invited to a healthy lunch and a Science Show. As they depart, each child is given a backpack full of school supplies and will leave with a skip in their step having spent the day surrounded by nature.

For more information about the annual Children's Science Fair, please contact April Walton (310) 550-2087 or [awalton@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:awalton@parks.lacounty.gov)

## Special Events

While some events may be in line with the 2014 agreement, they certainly do not appear to be in line with the Grant Deed. And despite being closed to the public for May and September, the Friends have events during these months for themselves, also in violation of the terms of the Grant Deed dictating that the Gardens be open to the Public. In the monthly spotlights, they interview a different member each month- few mention the children educational aspect, many mention the fabulous parties. Also, some events are for "members only" – i.e., not open the public.

From the Grant Deed

Pg 2. #1



*“the said property...shall be held and used...for the purpose of an arboretum or botanic garden and for no other purpose inconsistent with said use”*

2014 Agreement- classes are supposed to be about *“how well they interpret the historical collections at the facility”*

#### 4.05.04 Type of Events

Public programs to conform to new day/hours and number of participants allowed; however, subject matter for seminar/classes to be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent based on how well the classes interpret the historical collections at the facility. Also to include tours of the grounds for biology, botany, and horticulture groups.

Some examples from their website:

#### **“Educational” Events**

- High end art collecting “how to invest wisely in art”

#### Mumsey Nemiroff Discusses Fakes, Frauds and Forgeries in the Art World at the Virginia Robinson Gardens



The Virginia Robinson Gardens played host this past month to an intimate salon featuring guest speaker Mumsey Nemiroff. An experienced lecturer, having taught at UCLA for two decades on the subject of art connoisseurship, Mumsey recently spent a particularly gorgeous November morning illuminating just over two dozen Friends and their friends about the art of collecting.

“Understand what you’re buying,” she advises. “Buyer beware, always.”

In spotting a fake, Mumsey has identified six criteria to help collectors successfully procure genuine art: age, condition, rarity, aesthetic, provenance, and price. “Always beware of the words unique and rare,” she cautions.

[...Read More](#)

But at the center of the event was how to wisely invest one's money in art. And for those in attendance, including President Betty Goldstein and past Presidents Kerstin Royce and Patti Reinstein, Mumsey's talk proved incredibly informative about what to look for when purchasing genuine art and antiques.

- **Gingerbread House Decorating**

Participants were provided with a gorgeous, pre-assembled gingerbread house made by local bakery Tutto Bene; royal icing; figurines of trees, sleighs, Santa, snowmen, and more for their gingerbread house gardens; and deluxe candy kits (based on their pre-reserved color palette). The heart of the event was the hour-long decorating lesson by Della Gossett, Spago's Executive Pastry Chef. Everything from her tutorial on piping the royal icing (which dries faster than you can believe) to best practices for applying the candy, gave guests professional insight into making a great house. Additionally, Chef Della interspersed fun gingerbread house trivia (did you know Queen Victoria's wedding cake used royal icing which set a new standard for wedding cakes, and weighed over 300 pounds?!). Della truly was an excellent teacher and made the morning very special.

- **Art classes taught by world famous artists**

**4. Please add any additional information you would like to share!**

For me, the greatest gift from the Gardens is the opportunity to study botanical illustration. I knew nothing about it but found that it was taught in such a way that even your first piece was pleasant to look at -- not botanically correct, but pretty. Well, now after only 14 years or so, I am starting to feel somewhat capable of producing something decent. I encourage anyone who would like to try it to join one of our classes taught by famous artists from all over the world and see what you can do! You might be as surprised as I was!

- **Learn about Restaurants**

Eloquent and dapper as ever, Geary, the former pastry chef and best-selling author, charmed us during his second engagement at the Gardens by helping us to remember those restaurants that formed our first experiences as children and the ones that became our favorite haunts in our adult years. We learned about the origins of legendary Southern California restaurants, which ones have survived and how they have changed with the times. There were a bevy of questions, a clear indication of a successful talk and an enraptured audience.

## **Private Events**

Despite the Grant Deed stipulating that the Gardens be accessible by the public, there are numerous "member only" events.

Pg 2 #4

*"shall at all reasonable times be open and available for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public as an abortetum garden"*

Our new book club, Tea, Scones & Reading Group, has had its first meeting at the Gardens. The book club is open to new members and will be held quarterly. Announcements will be sent in plenty of time for you to read the book. Books are chosen with relevance to the Robinson family and their estate.



schools. Garden Tour co-chair Jeanne Anderson talked about the upcoming, not to be missed, very special members-only Garden Tour on October 23. Education chair Clare Wagner spoke about some very exciting events and lectures, including an upcoming presentation by interior designer extraordinaire Timothy Corrigan. Membership chair Natalie Gordon mentioned the annual Gingerbread House Decorating event that her committee sponsors and talked about opportunities to volunteer for her committee as did the Newsletter editor Linda Meadows.



## Not Open to the Public

The website states that the Gardens are closed to the public for the months of May and September, but they are allowing private member events to occur during those times.

Book Club event from September 2021

We would love for you to join us for our Education Lecture Series and our book club. The book club is open to a small number of guests; please contact the office if you are interested in attending. Because of limited space for our lecture series, we invite our membership to attend, so please consider becoming a [Society Member](#).

## Commercial Uses have been Occurring

Multiple references to vendors, boutiques and items “available for purchase”. Not all of the proceeds go to the Garden. I saw a 20% donation of proceeds referenced as well as the Friends being grateful for the “totally unexpected” donation of all of the proceeds from a book signing. The Friends appear to be allowing commercial activities on the site while taking a “cut”. And they also allow commercial filming to occur onsite for a fee.

From the Grant Deed,

Pg 2 #4 *"no business for profit should ever be conducted on said property"*

- This appears to have been violated by the October 23, 2021 shopping event where there were numerous vendors and according to the website 20% of the proceeds were donated. I.E., not 100%- the vendors appear to have "conducted business" on the property

### Vendor Sales onsite

Wonderfully curated by Dana, the boutiques around the pool and in the Pool Pavilion displayed enticing and popular items for sale from fabulous clothing and jewelry to shoes, colorful tablecloths, and bags. The attendees shopped happily, and 20% of the sale proceeds were donated to the Gardens.

It was Roses, Roses, Roses, in a rainbow of beautiful colors available in bouquets for purchase from Rose Lane Farms. On the tennis court, an enthusiastic group of "gardeners" were having a difficult time deciding which of the rose bushes they wanted to purchase. Also spotlighted was Virginia Robinson's favorite rose -- the beautiful and fragrant pink Eiffel Tower.



How do I become a retail vendor, room designer, or floral designer for your Annual Garden Tour?

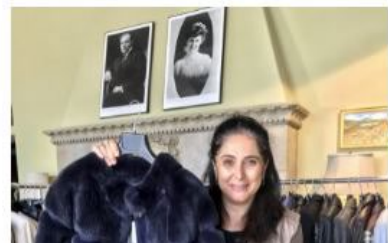
The Annual Garden Tour is held every year on the third Saturday in May from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The event showcases five grand private gardens on the Westside in addition to a festive decorated Robinson home located on a six-acre garden oasis in the heart of Beverly Hills. At the fabled Virginia Robinson Gardens, a lovely luncheon is served all day long and local vendors feature their wares in a chic boutique. Mrs. Robinson's historic home is open and decorated by remarkable floral and room designers expressing each year's theme. Guests are invited to enjoy floral design demonstrations, an opportunity drawing, as well as shopping in the unique boutiques made available at the estate that day. Proceeds from the Benefit Garden Tour help preserve the Virginia Robinson Gardens as well as allow the Friends of Robinson Gardens to provide ongoing community education and outreach programs.



Sunday, seated nearby, was busy greeting family and friends, both old and new, and signing copies of her book. Sunday graciously donated the proceeds from the sale of all books purchased at the Tea to the Friends. When asked about her donation, Sunday replied, "I loved the event! And so many people have been contacting me about how much they enjoyed it. I want to donate the proceeds from the sale of the books in gratitude to FRG for giving me such a special and meaningful event." We are deeply grateful to Sunday for her totally unexpected and very generous donation.





## Commercial Photoshoots

The Virginia Robinson Gardens & Estate is available for both commercial and non-commercial still photography shoots. Located in the heart of Beverly Hills, this lush, 6.2-acre estate, made up of six diverse gardens and unique, historical architecture, provides a dynamic backdrop to any photoshoot. Commercial and non-commercial photoshoots are available for a scheduled fee, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm - including set up and breakdown time.

To inquire about booking a commercial or non-commercial photoshoot, please email [visit@robinsongardens.org](mailto:visit@robinsongardens.org) or call (310) 550-2040.



## Already Renting out the Gardens for private events?

The Website says that they cannot host the below:

Can I have my wedding at the Virginia Robinson Gardens?	—
Unfortunately we are prohibited from hosting weddings, religious events, or political events.	

But if that is the case, then what events is this referring to?

## Event Prices

Events are priced individually depending upon the number of attendees, the location(s) within Robinson Gardens, the amount of set-up that is required for an event, and other factors.

### Included in the Event Package:

A limited selection of tables and chairs are available for up to 100 people, linens for up to 50 people. Includes 72" round tables that sit 10 people comfortably, white folding chairs, sun umbrellas, use of electrical outlets for lighting and sound, catering kitchen, restroom facilities, and the use of dumpsters on the property.

Limited parking: 25 spaces are available in the parking lot by the Pool Pavilion (Note that catering and rental companies also need to park in this lot and will reduce the number of spaces available for guest parking). If more than 25 spaces are needed, options are (1) Uber/Lyft/taxi, (2) park on Crescent (a nearby street) and walk up to VRG, or (3) valet parking. Parking on Elden Way is not allowed due to neighborhood restrictions.

*\*Caterers must stay throughout the event and be responsible for clean-up after the event.*

## Conclusion

The Gardens are essentially being used as a country club for the Friends. There are numerous references to donated food and beverages and I wonder if there is a quid pro quo going on for the benefit of the Friends social events in exchange for visibility on the website.

While they do offer educational opportunities for underserved children, this is a small percentage of its use compared to the plethora of fancy luncheons, parties, book clubs, and other social events for the benefit of its members.

It is my position that the uses violate numerous areas of the Grant Deed and that the clause citing the return to the purview of Beverly Hills has been triggered on multiple levels.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Weiss (on behalf of my client Kathy Checchi)

August 30, 2022

Via Email: [jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Ms. Jui Ing Chien

Park Planner

County of Los Angeles

Department of Parks and Recreation

1000 S. Fremont Ave.

Unit #40 A-9 West, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

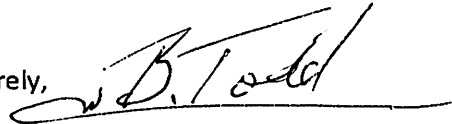
Alhambra, California 91083

Re: Comments on Virginia Robinson Garden Expansion Plan

Dear Ms. Chien and to Whom It May Concern:

1. Save the Virginia Robinson Garden from risks of fire and damages by the Private parties and events; and provide a comprehensive plan to prevent such risks;
2. Preserve the Virginia Robinson Garden Estate from mass visitors and show how the docent-led programs will be added and performed to ensure the estate is not ruined and damaged;
3. Disclose the Students' educational programs and its historic data and all other programs and activities in order to ensure the Garden has been used properly;
4. Disclose the outreach efforts made to improve the students' educational programs to benefit more students from L.A. County and especially Title 1 Schools;
5. Show the transparency on the maintenance costs and Friends of Robinson Garden's accounting for donations received and its expenditures;
6. Show how the private parties will be booked and managed fairly without making the Estate an exclusive backyard for some connected people and provide a rationale for what makes this expansion a public benefit;
7. Listen to the neighborhoods to their concerns, and provide mitigation measures which will protect the neighborhood; and
8. Honor the original donor agreement, and provide an explanation of why L.A. County believes they can break the agreement.

Sincerely,



Barry Todd

Name

Address

Summit Dr B.H. C.A 90210



Sent by email- jchien@parks.lacounty.gov

Dear Ms. Chien,

As residents of Cove Way and Summit Drive, we are **OPPOSED** to the changing the hours of the Virginia Robinson Garden, increasing the number of visitors and very opposed to adding 24 events. We are supportive of educational programs for school children.

We are very concerned for the reasons listed below. A parking lot for the Gardens is located at 1028 Cove Way and an increase in events, hours and number of visitors will impact our street.

**We specifically asked that you examine the following issues. These issues have not been adequately addressed in the DSEIR and we ask that they be addressed in the final SEIR.**

#### TRAFFIC

Our street is already a busy one. Drivers speed up and down the street and the entrance to the Gardens at 1028 Cove Way is at a blind spot in the road. Pulling in and out of that driveway will be difficult, as will the loading and unloading of event vehicles.

Also, in early afternoon, there is a great deal of traffic at the intersection of Cove Way and Hartford Way, as cars line up to turn right on Benedict Canyon. There are times when the entrance to our street is blocked, and we have to wait in the line of cars.

#### PARKING

Our street is already restricted to parking on one side, so it is packed with vehicles parking already. Often these cars are parked all day and visitors or workers coming to our residences have to park far up the hill. Any increase in visitors or events are going to impact parking greatly.

#### NOISE

Our neighborhood is very quiet in the evenings and on weekends. Expanding the hours of the Gardens to every day, including weekends and all Holidays will change the character of our neighborhood. We ask that the evaluation of this effect take measurements of the noise currently on the weekends and Holidays on our street.

## FIRE

Our neighborhood has recently been designated as an extreme Fire Risk. In fact, many of us struggled to obtain home insurance due to this designation. The risk of fire will increase at the Gardens with more visitors and more events. An evaluation should be made of how fire would be extinguished, since the paths in the Garden are too narrow to have a fire truck enter, there is a grove of palm trees which once on fire send embers throughout the neighborhood and there is no dedicated fire hydrant in the Gardens.

**We believe that the Garden could accomplish the objective of providing access within the current hours and that there is no need to increase the hours, days or number of events.**

Thank you,

Kathy and Al Checchi      [REDACTED] Cove Way

Michael McAlister      [REDACTED] Cove Way, [REDACTED] Cove Way, [REDACTED] Carolyn Wy

Jennifer and Randy Wooster      [REDACTED] Summit Drive

Joseph Akhtarzad      [REDACTED] Summit Drive

Bobby Kotick      [REDACTED] Cove Way, [REDACTED] Cove Way

August 30, 2022

Via Email: [ichien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:ichien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Ms. Jui Ing Chien  
Park Planner  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
1000 S. Fremont Ave.  
Unit #40 A-9 West, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Alhambra, California 91083

Re: Comments on Virginia Robinson Garden Expansion Plan

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7. Listen to the neighborhoods to their concerns, and provide mitigation measures which will protect the neighborhood; and
8. Honor the original donor agreement, and provide an explanation of why L.A. County believes they can break the agreement.

Sincerely,

Denise Jack Rochel  N. Beverly Dr.  
Name Address BH CA 90210

By email jchien@parks.lacounty.gov

Dear Ms. Chien,

LA County is proposing major changes to the operations of the Virginia Robinsons Gardens. WE ARE OPPOSED TO THESE CHANGES.

The reason that the County gives is to give people more access to the Gardens, especially underserved youth through school programs.

This could easily be done during the current hours 9-4 Monday - Saturday. The County has been in charge of the Gardens for decades but does very few educational programs for school children. Why hasn't the County done more of these programs? Is it access or lack of outreach?

Also, none of the private parties proposed (24 a year, up to 4 a month) would increase access. These parties would be given by individuals who can afford to pay for valet parking, catering, lighting, dance floors, sound systems. How does this increase access? These events will also destroy the garden with setup, takedown and attendees walking through the Gardens.

We ask that the County define "access", create a specific plan to get school children to the Gardens and not create more inequity by these 24 private parties.

Thank you,

Gail & Soly McLaure



North Canon St.

B. H.

CA 90210

Gail McLaure

By email jchien@parks.lacounty.gov

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We ask that the County define "access", create a specific plan to get school children to the Gardens and not create more inequity by these 24 private parties.

Thank you,

ISAAC MORADI

██████ N Hillcrest DR

Beverly Hills ca 90210



jchien@parks.lacounty.gov

Dear Ms. Chien-

We are in favor of continuing and expanding the educational programs for Children at the Virginia Robinson Gardens, but we are strongly opposed to expanding the hours and permitting 24 private events.

The draft SEIR completely ignores the risk of Fire. The Final SEIR must take this important issue into account and retain the 4 private events instead of expanding them to 24.

Fire is ignored in the Draft SEIR. The SEIR states

"There has not been a wildland fire of any significance in Beverly Hills and the last large wildland fire adjacent to the city occurred in Franklin Canyon more than 50 years ago."

This is not true.

What about the Bel Air Fire of 1961, the Getty Fire of 2019 and the fire that occurred recently at 2040N Beverly Drive- less than a mile from the Gardens?

Our neighborhood was designated a Fire Hazard area and there are signs posted on many of our streets.

Also, with the water restrictions in place, our landscaping is drier than it has ever been.

Special Events will mean more people entering the Garden to set up since there are no catering facilities in the Garden. There will be cooking for food prep, lighting and sound system set up- all which could ignite a fire.


Firetrucks don't fit into the narrow walks of the Garden.

For all these reasons, the Special Events should be limited to 4.

As neighbors, we support the Gardens, but it is not fair or equitable to expose us to Fire risk for our own homes.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline MORADI

██████ N. Hillcrest, DR 

Beverly Hills ca 90210

August 30, 2022

Via Email: [jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Ms. Jui Ing Chien  
Park Planner  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
1000 S. Fremont Ave.  
Unit #40 A-9 West, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Alhambra, California 91083

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8. Honor the original donor agreement, and provide an explanation of why L.A. County believes they can break the agreement.

Sincerely,

*M. BOLOUR*  
*MEHDI BOLOUR* [REDACTED] *LOUREL WAY 90210 BEVERLY* *711285*  
Name Address

Dear Ms. Chien,

We are vehemently opposed to the Virginia Robinson Gardens proposed changes to their operations.

While we are supportive of the Gardens mission, it should not come at our expense.

Whatever the findings of the Supplemental Environmental Report that is being prepared shows, these changes are outrageous and threaten our right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

The Gardens already disregards the parking laws, and the Elden Way no parking restrictions. They allow visitors and event trucks to take over Elden Way on a regular basis despite that being prohibited, and routinely block resident driveways cutting off access to our homes.

There are times when emergency vehicles would not be able to get through. We do not want to have a tragedy occur because the Gardens were not interested in following safety protocols.

These proposed changes are alarming. They essentially change the Gardens into a commercial venue, and will completely ruin the fabric of our neighborhood.

In the face of resident opposition, the Gardens already expanded outside of their original scope in 2014. This cannot be allowed to happen again.

While the current situation is bad enough, these changes significantly threaten our safety, our security, and our way of life.

We respectfully request that the County and Gardens abandon their pursuit of this expansion.

  
Yours Sincerely,

DOHENY ROAD BEVERLY HILLS 90210 M. BOLOVIZ  
TRUST NO 3 NEMOI BOLOVIZ TRUST OF TRUST NO  
3



Dear Ms. Chien-

We are writing to bring out some points that were either inaccurate or not discussed in the Draft SEIR.

**PARKING, TRAFFIC AND EMERGENCY ACCESS ON OUR STREETS:**

Since there are only 35 parking spaces, valet is required for any large event. Nothing in the Draft SEIR discusses what the plan is for parking all the cars which don't fit in the Gardens.

When events have occurred at the Gardens in the past, valet parkers clog our residential streets with parked cars. This makes it impossible for Emergency vehicles to get through to our homes. There are many elderly people who live in the neighborhood. If an Emergency occurs, the residents need to be sure that Emergency vehicles would be able to reach our homes.

Uber and Lyft is not a solution, because that means that the traffic will be increased two fold- one trip for drop off and one trip for pick up. It would also mean that cars will be idling in the cul-de-sac for pickup and delivery.

This is already a problem with the 4 events a year which the Garden currently sponsor. With 24 events it will be unbearable.

**We request that you discuss a specific plan for handling all these cars. Specifically, there should be an off-site parking lot and then transfer the attendees by shuttle bus to the Gardens. We also request that the Events be limited to 4.**

**FIRE AND EMERGENCIES IN THE GARDENS**

The Garden is not equipped to handle fires and emergency situations within the garden itself. There is no access available for emergency vehicles such as ambulances, fire trucks and paramedics. Also, the pathways with the Garden are narrow and uneven.

If the attendees are increased to 200 people a day plus 24 private events a year, this will be a huge problem.

The draft SEIR ignored the risk of fire, but our neighborhood has been declared a High Risk Fire area.

**We request that the Final SEIR have an emergency plan which spells out in detail how fire, medical and other emergencies will be handled, including that events will be cancelled on high-risk fire days.**

Thank you,

Sally Harkham

 Crescent Drive

Dear Ms. Chien-

I am writing to OPPOSE the County's proposed changes for the Virginia Robinson Gardens.

Many of the neighbors have met in person or by Zoom with County representatives and/or written letters to the County. The Draft SEIR didn't answer any of our concerns. We are concerned with the traffic, parking, noise and fire risk- none of these issues are adequately addressed in the Draft SEIR. I know you will hear from many neighbors.

Under the current operations, there are 4 daytime events a year, which are difficult for the neighborhood to absorb. 24 events will completely overwhelm the neighborhood.

One issue which is particularly troublesome to me is how the County and the Friends organization uses Elden Way for these Events.

### **Delivery Trucks**

Several days prior and after events held at the Gardens, Elden Way becomes as staging area as there is NO truck access inside the Gardens. Understand, that the Gardens space for events would be 100% outdoors. Everything must be trucked into the Garden- rental tables, chairs, dishes, plates, silverware, and food preparation items (ovens, etc.). There are no catering facilities existing in the Garden. In addition, lighting and sound systems need to be brought in and set up as well as any dance floor. Even restrooms will need to be brought in. After any event, all these items are packed up again and taken away.

Unloading and reloading these items are all done on the public street of Elden Way because delivery trucks can't access the Garden.

What other Garden uses the public street to do this? Descanso Gardens has its own parking lot (800 spaces) and its own Café, which is required to be used for any event.

### **Blocking the Street**

At all past events, ALL of Elden Way is completely blocked off to any residents parking. That is the only way to have two way traffic so cars can

come up the street, circle in front of the Gardens to let people off and continue down the street to exit. Valet Parking along Crescent Drive exceeds the 2-hour limit posted.

The County suggests using UBER and LYFT. That will double the number of trips to the Gardens and cars will idle and emit fumes while they are in line waiting to drop off and pick up attendees.

### **Emergency Vehicles**

My parents live on Elden Way and are elderly and have health issues. Emergency vehicles will be totally blocked from reaching my parents' home in case of an emergency. Emergency vehicles also can't access the Gardens if there is an emergency within. **This creates a health and safety issue for our community.**

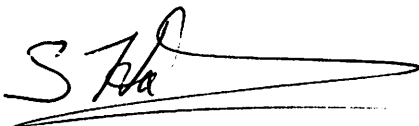
### **Alternatives which should be considered in the Final SEIR**

An alternative the Final SEIR should examine is to limit the number of events to 4, as it has been done in the past. Turning the Gardens into a commercial venue for Weddings and other family celebrations for 24 events, up to 4 a month will create an impossible traffic jam in our neighborhood and create health and safety issues.

Another alternative the Final SEIR should examine is for the Gardens to take part of their 6 acre property and create more parking inside the Gardens.

Respectfully submitted,

Sam Hakim

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Hakim', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

By email [jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Ms. Chien,

We strongly OPPOSE changing the operations of the Virginia Robinsons Gardens.

While we are supportive of the Gardens mission, the changes proposed will adversely affect our neighborhood and threaten our right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

The Gardens already disregards the parking laws, and increasing the number of events from 4 to 24 will have a major negative impact on the traffic and parking situation in our neighborhood.

There are times when emergency vehicles would not be able to get through. We do not want a tragedy to occur because the Gardens were not interested in following safety protocols.

Adding Weddings, family celebrations will essentially change the Garden into a commercial venue. The noise from these events alone will disrupt the peaceful nature of our neighborhood.

The Draft SEIR does not answer any of our concerns. Alternatives should be fully considered.

There can be expanded access without ruining our neighborhood.

Thank you,

Sandra Goldfarb  
■ Crescent Drive  
Beverly Hills

August 30, 2022

Via Email: [jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Ms. Jui Ing Chien

Park Planner

County of Los Angeles

Department of Parks and Recreation

1000 S. Fremont Ave.

Unit #40 A-9 West, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

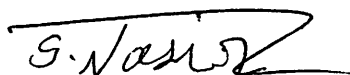
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Sincerely,



Shahnaz Nassir

Name



Address

N. Beverly Dr. B.H. C.A

90210

jchien@parks.lacounty.gov

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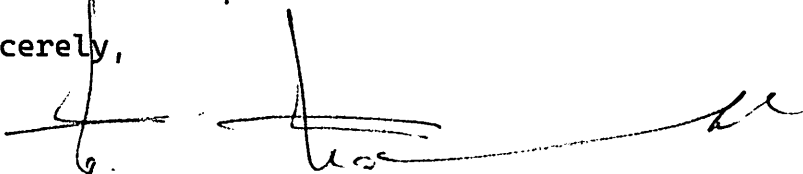
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Firetrucks don't fit into the narrow walks of the Garden.

For all these reasons, the Special Events should be limited to 4.

As neighbors, we support the Gardens, but it is not fair or equitable to expose us to Fire risk for our own homes.

Sincerely,



SHAHIRZAD SHAMSI



OLYMPIC Blvd

BEVERLY HILLS, Ca, 90212

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We are vehemently opposed to the Virginia Robinson Gardens proposed changes to their operations.

While we are supportive of the Gardens mission, it should not come at our expense.

Whatever the findings of the Supplemental Environmental Report that is being prepared shows, these changes are outrageous and threaten our right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

The Gardens already disregards the parking laws, and the Elden Way no parking restrictions. They allow visitors and event trucks to take over Elden Way on a regular basis despite that being prohibited, and routinely block resident driveways cutting off access to our homes.

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These proposed changes are alarming. They essentially change the Gardens into a commercial venue, and will completely ruin the fabric of our neighborhood.

In the face of resident opposition, the Gardens already expanded outside of their original scope in 2014. This cannot be allowed to happen again.

While the current situation is bad enough, these changes significantly threaten our safety, our security, and our way of life.

We respectfully request that the County and Gardens abandon their pursuit of this expansion.

Yours Sincerely,

SHARAD (RADI) SHAMSI

S. Samsi

OLYMPIC BLVD BEVERLY HILLS Ca, 90212



Jui Ing Chien

Park Planner, Department of Parks and Recreation

By email [jchien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:jchien@parks.lacounty.gov)

We believe there are many deficiencies in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR), including traffic, parking, water, safety, but the purpose of this letter is to alert the City to one huge deficiency – the discussion of Fire Hazards and Emergency response.

## **FIRES**

The neighborhood around the Virginia Robinson Gardens (the Gardens) has recently been declared an Extreme Fire Hazard Area, and many residents of the area had their home and property insurance raised significantly or canceled completely.

Yet, the Draft SEIR glosses over this important issue. Specifically, the DSEIR states:

**“3.21.1 There has not been a wildland fire of any significance in Beverly Hills, and the last large wildland fire adjacent to the city occurred in Franklin Canyon more than 50 years ago”**

This is completely inaccurate.

The DSEIR fails to discuss the Bel-Air Fire of 1961. Bel Air is just a few miles west of Beverly Hills. The Bel Air Fire was a disaster that began as a construction debris fire on November 6, 1961 in the Bel Air Community of Los Angeles. The fire destroyed 484 homes and burned 6,090 acres. At least 200 firemen were injured. This fire moved so quickly and burned so out of control that children were at The John Thomas Dye school that day and then evacuated by noon. By that evening, The John Thomas Dye School had burned to the ground. Much of the difficulty in fighting that fire came from the narrow streets and limited access in Bel Air.

The DSEIR also fails to discuss the Getty Fire of 2019 which burned 745 acres in Los Angeles. Thousands of people were evacuated during this fire and schools were closed. 10 homes were destroyed, and 15 residences were damaged.

On August 15, 2022, a quarter acre fire started at 2040 N. Beverly Dr. (about one mile or less from the Gardens and grew to around one acre. The fire was contained 90 minutes after it started, according to LAFD. The fire was in medium to heavy brush and was burning uphill, authorities said. Some 85 Los Angeles County firefighters responded to the brush fire by ground and air with the help of the Beverly Hills and LA County fire departments, according to LAFD.

Wildfire is a real hazard for Beverly Hills and can't be minimized. The Gardens are particularly prone to fire for several reasons. There is a palm grove and palm trees are notorious for sending embers once ignited. Also, the Gardens have planted an extensive amount of bamboo, which ignites easily. All of this plant material is even more prone to fire hazard with the limitation on watering in the current drought. Most importantly, access to the Gardens is very limited.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

The DSEIR failed to discuss the important fact that Beverly Hills Fire Department vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances and rescue vehicles) do not have access to the Garden property. First responders can only access the Garden on foot. A building overhang on the property blocks access to the property by rescue and emergency vehicles. because of the overhang in the parking lot, no fire trucks or emergency vehicles can access the property.

Note, the six-acre property is undulated, and some areas have limited, uneven pathways compounding an emergency response. This limitation has the potential to delay a critical rescue as well as delay transport to hospital facilities especially when rescue personnel have access limitations.

The fire risk at the Gardens presents another unique concern. According to the County staff a pressurized fire hydrant exists in the front of the Gardens' grounds. The City Fire Marshall, however, failed to indicate knowledge of this hydrant. In the event of a serious fire, however, additional fire hydrants may be needed. Any backup hydrant would need to extend considerable distances, possibly even from Carolyn Way, Cove, and/or Crescent. The nearest fire hydrant appears to be at 1017 Crescent Drive, a considerable distance from the entrance to the Gardens. This fact will again complicate and delay any response to a fire emergency at the Gardens, perhaps even threaten historic features of the property and potentially spread fire to nearby residences. Any concern for the safety of visitors and staff compels rules and operational procedures which account for the safety limitations of the property. The DSEIR fails to address this critical concern.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Special Events will require set up on the property, since there is no kitchen or catering facilities. The DSEIR also talks about setting up additional lighting and sound systems. Not only will these require many people entering the Gardens to set up and take down, in addition to the attendees at the Special Events, but there is also a known risk that catering facilities, lighting and sound systems malfunction and present a new threat of fire.

During Special Events, cars clog the neighbor streets, blocking many driveways and limiting Emergency vehicles from accessing private homes in the area. If the neighbors have an emergency and call 911, the emergency vehicle may not be able to reach them.

As residents of Beverly Hills, we believe that the risk of Fire and Emergency is a critical adverse impact which the County DSEIR has completely ignored.

**The Final SEIR needs to address the risk of fire by having the Gardens inspected by the BH Fire Department regularly, by limiting the number of events to 4 to avoid fire hazard due to catering, lighting and sound equipment and to close the Garden on high level fire days.**

Sincerely,

Kathy and Al Checchi

████████ Cove Way

Roxanne Heptner

████████ Cove Way

Jodi and Don Stine      [REDACTED] Cove Way

Michael and Michelle Weiner      [REDACTED] Carolyn Way

Michael McAlister      [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Cove Way, [REDACTED] Carolyn Way

Honorable Mayor Bosse and Members of the City Council

City of Beverly Hills

455 North Rexford

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Honorable Mayor Bosse and City Council Members,

The Harry and Virginia Robinson Estate, currently known as “The Virginia Robison Gardens (VRG),” was built in 1911, predating the incorporation of the City of Beverly Hills by two years. During its 66-year tenure as a private estate, the Robinson family built the foundation for what eventually became Beverly Hills. The Robinsons’ traveled the world with a botanist and collected rare and beautiful plants that still thrive on the 6.2-acre garden and in other parts of the city where they were introduced. The estate was used extensively by the Robinson’s to entertain studio heads and legends of the silver screen. Likewise, they brought together heads of state and major players of corporate America. This was done in the spirit of benefiting the growth and development of society, with an emphasis on gentility and promoting philanthropic endeavors to benefit a global community. Furthermore, the underlining intent was to promote “fine living” and the advancement of the visual and performing arts.

Today as a public entity, programs echo the spirit of the family’s intent when it was deeded to the county as a house museum and botanical garden. The county, as the stewards of this historic property, not only have deeply invested in the estate’s physical restoration as a historic display garden and house museum, but have emulated the spirit of the family to build a strong community, while emphasizing the necessity to respect the past while embracing the future.

The Robinson Gardens benefits the community, including the immediate neighbors, by providing green space, resulting in positive gains in home values. For many local residences, it provides opportunities to volunteer as docents and participate in the many programs offered at VRG. One of the largest beneficiaries of this green oasis are the 2,000 elementary children, who annually visit the estate. While visiting the garden, they learn from trained docents about the value of a healthy eco-systems and the practice of planting and caring for vegetable gardens and the concept of eating wholesome-unprocessed, healthy food.

After the last expansion of the Supplemental Environment Impact Review (SEIR) in 2014, the Gardens hosted many additional events for both youth and adults. As the Superintendent of the VRG from 1997 – 2002, I witnessed a steadfast commitment to respect the integrity of the neighborhood by developing and implementing an extensive list of “Good Neighbor Policies.” These policies were reviewed and refined after each event, reacting to any concerns from the neighbors and event participants. Additionally, the county operates the venue following the Department of Interiors guidelines for Historic Buildings to further protect the historic narrative and integrity of the living and non-living collections.

The County Parks Department staff learned how to manage traffic and noise after the first expansion of the EIR in 2014, and are now poised and ready to remain sensible and responsible in executing the

greater use of the property as proposed in the new SEIR. The proposed changes provide greater accessibility by offering longer hours and more open days. If adopted, this operational model will align VRG with Descanso Gardens, in La Canada Flintridge, CA and The Huntington Gardens in San Marino, CA, both of which successfully operate in the center of residential neighborhoods, much like VRG.

Please support the proposed operational changes to VRG to allow greater accessibility to the house museum and gardens, allowing this national asset to be shared with all those who wish to experience its magic and grandeur. This is exactly what the Robinson family intended when they gifted their estate to the public in perpetuity to be operated as a house museum and botanic garden.

Most respectfully,

Mrs. Marguerite Lindsay, Elementary School SPED Paraprofessional

San Gabriel, CA 91775

Michael & Michele Wiener

██████████ Carolyn Way  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
████████████████████

September 6, 2022

Ms. Jui Ing Chien  
Park Planner  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
1000 S. Fremont Ave.  
Unit #40 A-9 West, 3rd Floor  
Alhambra, California 91083

Re: Proposed Operational Changes at the Virginia Robinson Gardens ("Gardens")

Dear Ms. Chien,

My family resides at ██████████ Carolyn Way, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. The purpose of this letter is to express our opposition to operational changes at the Gardens, as currently proposed. In addition to echoing the concerns expressed by our neighbors both at the public hearings and in the correspondence, we are deeply concerned about increased noise that will invariably result from the proposed operational changes.

Previous events held at the Gardens have interfered with our ability to quietly enjoy the residence we worked hard to purchase, especially our backyard. Notwithstanding the opinions expressed in the EIR by the County's paid consultants, the sound which emanates from events at the Gardens has interfered with our ability to have a family conversation. The EIR did not address the fact that sound travels through our canyons in a manner that is different from a flat environment.

Is it meaningful to the County that if twenty-four (24) evening events are held at the Gardens, the tranquil neighborhood - which we bargained for when we chose to settle here - will begin to feel and sound like an evening under the stars at the Hollywood Bowl? Chapter 12 of the Los Angeles County Code of Ordinances provides that "Intrusive noise" means that alleged offensive noise which intrudes over and above the existing ambient noise at the receptor property. Imagine the cacophony that will result if residents - whose properties are contiguous to the Gardens - schedule events for the same afternoon or evening as an event at the Gardens.

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We urge the County to evaluate the proposed changes using the Golden Rule (i.e., a moral principle which denotes that you should treat others the same way you would like to be treated yourself) and to reject operational changes to the Gardens use, as currently proposed.

Respectfully,



Michael & Michele Wiener  
Residents

cc: Hilda L. Solis: [firstdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:firstdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov)  
Holly J. Mitchell: [hollyjmitchell@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:hollyjmitchell@bos.lacounty.gov)  
Sheila Kuehl: [sheila@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:sheila@bos.lacounty.gov)  
Janice Hahn: [fourthdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:fourthdistrict@bos.lacounty.gov)  
Kathryn Barger: [kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov)  
Fesia Davenport: [FDavenport@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:FDavenport@ceo.lacounty.gov)  
[ttway@beverlyhills.org](mailto:ttway@beverlyhills.org)  
[cchen@beverlyhills.org](mailto:cchen@beverlyhills.org)

- **12.08.390 - Exterior noise standards—Citations for violations authorized when.**

[SHARE LINK TO SECTION](#)[PRINT SECTION](#)[DOWNLOAD \(DOCX\) OF SECTION](#)[EMAIL SECTION](#)

A.

Unless otherwise herein provided, the following exterior noise levels shall apply to all receptor properties within a designated noise zone:

....

Unless otherwise herein provided, no person shall operate or cause to be operated, any source of sound at any location within the unincorporated county, or allow the creation of any noise on property owned, leased, occupied or otherwise controlled by such person which causes the noise level, when measured on any other property either incorporated or unincorporated, to exceed any of the following exterior noise standards:

Standard No. 1 shall be the exterior noise level which may not be exceeded for a cumulative period of more than 30 minutes in any hour. Standard No. 1 shall be the applicable noise level from subsection A of this section; or, if the ambient L50 exceeds the foregoing level, then the ambient L50 becomes the exterior noise level for Standard No. 1.

Standard No. 2 shall be the exterior noise level which may not be exceeded for a cumulative period of more than 15 minutes in any hour. Standard No. 2 shall be the applicable noise level from subsection A of this section plus 5dB; or, if the ambient L25 exceeds the foregoing level, then the ambient L25 becomes the exterior noise level for Standard No. 2.

Standard No. 3 shall be the exterior noise level which may not be exceeded for a cumulative period of more than five minutes in any hour. Standard No. 3 shall be the applicable noise level from subsection A of this section plus 20dB; or, if the ambient L8.3 exceeds the foregoing level, then the ambient L8.3 becomes exterior noise level for Standard No. 3.

Standard No. 4 shall be the exterior noise level which may not be exceeded for a cumulative period of more than one minute in any hour. Standard No. 4 shall be the applicable noise level from subsection A of this section plus 15dB; or, if the ambient L1.7 exceeds the foregoing level, then the ambient L1.7 becomes the exterior noise level for Standard No. 4.



Standard No. 5 shall be the exterior noise level which may not be exceeded for any period of time. Standard No. 5 shall be the applicable noise level from subsection A of this section plus 20dB; or, if the ambient L0 exceeds the foregoing level then the ambient L0 becomes the exterior noise level for Standard No. 5.

C.

If the measurement location is on a boundary property between two different zones, the exterior noise level utilized in subsection B of this section to determine the exterior standard shall be the arithmetic mean of the exterior noise levels in subsection A of the subject zones. Except as provided for above in this subsection C, when an intruding noise source originates on an industrial property and is impacting another noise zone, the applicable exterior noise level as designated in subsection A shall be the daytime exterior noise level for the subject receptor property.

D.

The ambient noise histogram shall be measured at the same location along the property line utilized in subsection B of this section, with the alleged intruding noise source inoperative. If for any reason the alleged intruding noise source cannot be turned off, the ambient noise histogram will be estimated by performing a measurement in the same general area of the alleged intruding noise source but at a sufficient distance such that the noise from the alleged intruding noise source is at least 10dB below the ambient noise histogram in order that only the actual ambient noise histogram be measured. If the difference between the ambient noise histogram and the alleged intruding noise source is 5 to 10dB, then the level of the ambient noise histogram itself can be reasonably determined by subtracting a one-decibel correction to account for the contribution of the alleged intruding noise source.

E.

In the event the intrusive exceeds the exterior noise standards as set forth in subsections B and C of this section at a specific receptor property and the health officer has reason to believe that this violation at said specific receptor property was unanticipated and due to abnormal atmospheric conditions, the health officer shall issue an abatement notice in lieu of a citation. If the specific violation is abated, no citation shall be issued therefor. If, however, the specific violation is not abated, the health officer may issue a citation.

(Ord. 11778 § 2 (Art. 4 § 403), 1978; Ord. 11773 § 2 (Art. 4 § 403), 1978.)

Dear Ms. Chien,

The Friends of the Robinson Gardens have submitted letters on behalf of the VRG and support of the proposed changes. I am opposed to the changes and feel that the comparison that the VRG draws to other Arboretums and Botanical Gardens is not valid.

1. Request to stay open until Sunset: Descanso Gardens is open until 7, South Coast Botanical Garden until 5, LA County Arboretum until 4:30 or 6:30 with shorter hours on the weekend.
2. Size and Facilities: The Descanso Gardens sits on 160 acres with 800 parking spaces and is bordered by a major highway and has a full café and catering on site with a metro train running through it. The VRG sits on 6 acres in a residential section, bordered only by private homes, has no food service available (everything must be brought in), has less than 35 parking spaces, and has no access to public transportation (bus is a 3-4 block walk, and nearest Metro will be Wilshire and Rodeo when completed).
3. The VRG compared themselves to The Wallis and to LACMA which are in a commercial/business zone and have major dedicated parking lots so that no one needs to park on neighboring streets. This is not the case with the VRG as they have gardeners and maintenance staff as well as office and event staff who would be presumable utilizing some of their "claimed" 35 spaces.
4. The VRG claims to need more hours so they can access more students. If the goal is education, then why are school tours only scheduled from 10-12:30 and limited to 42 students? Assuming a tour would be 90 minutes to 2 hours, why can't they do a second or third tour during the day? Schools try to leave a property in time to return students to school. Opening the park on Sundays would not increase the number of children's educational events.
5. The VRG is not a park. Parks are for recreation with hiking trails, walking paths, play equipment for children and dogs are allowed. The VRG is a series of winding paths through the property on uneven terrain and can only be accessed as part of organized tour (by reservation).
6. Special 24 events (up to 4 per month). This places an unreasonable burden on immediate neighbors and those on nearby streets as trucks must be brought in for catering, rentals, flowers, music, etc. The VRG is in the middle of a residential neighborhood with inadequate parking for larger events that require outside staff, valet, etc. Events with as many as one thousand guests would create a huge burden on traffic. Given the large fees for rentals, valet, permits, catering, etc., these special events would appeal only to corporate or wealthy individuals and thus doing nothing to increase inclusivity.

I look forward to seeing these issues addressed in the Final SEIR.

Sincerely,

*Leslie M. Harnin*

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Sincerely,

Roxanne Heptner

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I look forward to seeing these issues addressed in the Final SEIR.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Heptner

The County compares the VRG to Descanso Gardens but that's not an accurate comparison because Descanso is much larger, has ample free parking and its own food service, multiple indoor facilities, and restrooms.

**Descanso Gardens**

Size	150 acres
Hours	Mon-Friday 9-7 summer, 9-5 winter Sat/Sunday 9-5
Parking	800 spaces
Surrounding Area	Major highway on one border, residential on others
Hosted Events	Yes, but requirement to use the Descanso Café for all catering

*The VRG should be compared to similar smaller botanical gardens.*

**Please make the Gardens comparable hours to other Gardens and keep the Special Events at 4.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ann Bernstein". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Dear Ms. Chien,

The hours the County is proposing for the Robinson Gardens are **excessive**, especially if you consider that the VRG is in a residential area, surrounded on all sides by private homes.

None of the other Gardens are open until Sunset. Sunset during the summer can be as late as 7:30 or 8 pm and that is when the sun sets. Then there is a period of twilight when it is still light.

**Virginia Robinson Gardens**

Size	6 acres
Hours	Currently 9-4 Monday-Saturday/ Proposed 9-
sunset Every Day	
Parking	35 spaces
Surrounding area	completely residential on all sides
Hosted events	currently 4/ Proposed 24

To have an event at the VRG, it must be outside and everything needs to be trucked in by delivery trucks- tables, chairs, a tent, cooking facilities, lighting, sound system dance floor and even restrooms, since during the large events, the house is closed. All these trucks must unload in the Elden Way Cul de sac since large trucks don't fit in the driveway of the VRG.

The effect of bringing in all of these rental trucks and facilities to the Garden will be to destroy the Garden.

September 5, 2022

Via Email: [ichien@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:ichien@parks.lacounty.gov)

Ms. Jui Ing Chien

Park Planner

County of Los Angeles

Department of Parks and Recreation

1000 S. Fremont Ave.

Unit #40 A-9 West, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Alhambra, California 91083

Re: Comments on Virginia Robinson Garden Expansion Plan

Dear Ms. Chien and to Whom It May Concern:

1. Save the Virginia Robinson Garden from risks of fire and damages by the Private parties and events; and provide a comprehensive plan to prevent such risks;
2. Preserve the Virginia Robinson Garden Estate from mass visitors and show how the docent-led programs will be added and performed to ensure the estate is not ruined and damaged;
3. Disclose the Students' educational programs and its historic data and all other programs and activities in order to ensure the Garden has been used properly;
4. Disclose the outreach efforts made to improve the students' educational programs to benefit more students from L.A. County and especially Title 1 Schools;
5. Show the transparency on the maintenance costs and Friends of Robinson Garden's accounting for donations received and its expenditures;
6. Show how the private parties will be booked and managed fairly without making the Estate an exclusive backyard for some connected people and provide a rationale for what makes this expansion a public benefit;
7. Listen to the neighborhoods to their concerns, and provide mitigation measures which will protect the neighborhood; and
8. Honor the original donor agreement, and provide an explanation of why L.A. County believes they can break the agreement.

Sincerely,

Robin Kim

Name

Address