

SUPPLEMENTAL
REPORT TO THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: September 23, 2025
HEARING DATE: September 24, 2025 AGENDA ITEM: 8
PROJECT NUMBER: R2005-01452-(3)
PERMIT NUMBER(S): Variance No. 200900001
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 3
PROJECT LOCATION: 2354 Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Topanga
OWNER: CMI Corporate Marketing, Inc.
APPLICANT: Cory Isaacson
CASE PLANNER: Tyler Montgomery, Principal Regional Planner
TMontgomery@planning.lacounty.gov

REVISED RECOMMENDATION

LA County Planning staff (“Staff”) recommends that Project Number R2005-01452-(3), Variance Number 200900001, be continued to December 10, 2025, without opening the public hearing.

Staff recommends the following motion:

I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION CONTINUE VARIANCE NO. 200900001 TO DECEMBER 10, 2025, WITHOUT OPENING THE PUBLIC HEARING.

BACKGROUND

This agenda item is a request to construct a new 4,000-square-foot single-family residence within 50 feet of a mapped significant ridgeline (“Project”) in the A-1-5 (Light Agricultural – Five-Acre Minimum Required Lot Area) Zone, and within the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Community Standards District (“CSD”), pursuant to County Code Section 22.56.260 as it existed in 2009.¹ The Project is located at 2354 Topanga Canyon Boulevard in

¹ Note: Pursuant to County Code Section 22.246.020 (Applicability of Zone Changes and Ordinance Amendments), the Project applicant chose to have the complete Variance

unincorporated Topanga ("Project Site"). This is an appeal of the Hearing Officer's approval of June 24, 2025.

After the previous Supplemental Report to the Regional Planning Commission ("Commission") was issued on September 18, 2025, Staff received four letters of opposition to the Project from area residents. These letters, which are attached as Exhibit A-2, state that the integrity of the significant ridgeline provisions in the CSD should be respected, notwithstanding the Commission's ability to approve a Variance, and that adjacent parkland should be preserved.

The previous Supplemental Report to the Commission, issued on September 18, 2025, included a letter from Paul Edelman, representing the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority ("MRCA").

The MRCA letter recommended moving the location of the residence approximately 50 feet to the southwest, within the existing graded pad, to reduce the areas of required off-site brush clearance to the north and east, including the off-site brush clearance that would occur on their property.² The Project applicant, Cory Isaacson ("Applicant"), has stated that he would be willing to relocate the residence. However, this relocation could result in the residence being visible from Topanga Canyon Boulevard, a designated scenic route. Also, this relocation would necessitate relocating the hammerhead turnaround required by the Fire County Department, which may require additional grading.

The MRCA letter alleged that the unpermitted grading within the MRCA Summit Valley – Ed Edelman Park to the north of the Project Site was conducted by the Applicant. Staff has issued a Notice of Violation for this grading to MRCA, which is the property owner, because the unpermitted grading occurred on their property.

The Applicant has stated that he is not responsible for the unpermitted grading on the MRCA property to the north and does not know who is responsible for it. Staff has studied historic aerial photos and has determined that it is likely the unpermitted grading occurred concurrently with the legally permitted grading that occurred on the two residential properties located to the west of the Project Site. For further details regarding this conclusion, please refer to the Supplemental Report to the Hearing Officer dated June 23, 2025, which is part of the materials attached to the Report to the Commission issued on September 11, 2025 (see Exhibit D).

application be subject to the zoning and regulations in effect at the time it was submitted in 2009.

² Note: Staff has consulted with the County Department of Agricultural Commissioner / Weights and Measures ("ACWM"), which normally tasks property owners with brush clearance requirements. ACWM informed Staff that, while the MRCA is a state agency, there is an ongoing disagreement regarding whether state law allows the County to require brush clearance on MRCA property and, if so, who is required to undertake it.

The MRCA letter also included aerial photos showing that storage containers and construction equipment were stored on the Applicant's property before being moved onto the illegally graded portion of the MRCA property. The Applicant states that the storage containers and construction equipment belong to the construction company working on the two residential properties located to the west of the Project Site. While they were originally stored on the Applicant's property with his permission, he later asked for them to be removed. He alleges that this is when the storage containers and construction equipment were moved northward onto the MRCA property.

Staff is still of the opinion that the unpermitted grading on the MRCA property to the north should be addressed as a separate violation unrelated to the Project because it is not located on the Project Site. Furthermore, in the absence of any concrete evidence that the Applicant conducted the unpermitted grading, this violation should not delay the Commission's decision regarding this Project.

Some grading was approved on the Project Site in 2006 via Zoning Conformance Review No. 200600712 ("ZCR"). After studying the approved plans and historic aerials, and conducting site visits, Staff has concluded that some grading may have been occurred outside of the area approved by the ZCR. Staff needs to conduct further research to determine whether this is the case. Also, the Applicant has admitted that he recently placed a gate across the driveway leading to his property to discourage further unpermitted storage or unpermitted grading by others. This gate did not receive approval from LA County Planning or the Department of Public Works' Building and Safety Division.

Staff needs additional time to address the potential unpermitted grading on the Applicant's property, as well as the unpermitted gate across the access driveway. This additional time would also allow Staff to study whether relocating the residence to the southwest would result in a better Project design. Staff will work with the Applicant to determine if moving the residence would result in it being visible from Topanga Canyon Boulevard, as well as whether the hammerhead turnaround could be easily relocated. Based on the results, Staff will make a recommendation to the Commission on whether the residence should be shifted approximately 50 feet to the southwest.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Tyler Montgomery of the Coastal Development Services Section at tmontgomery@planning.lacounty.gov.

Report

Reviewed By:

Rob Glaser

Robert Glaser, Supervising Regional Planner

Report

Approved By:

M. Glaser

Mitch Glaser, Assistant Administrator

LIST OF ATTACHED EXHIBITS	
EXHIBIT A-2	Four (4) Letters of Opposition to the Project

Hearing Officer
Los Angeles County Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

18 September 2025

Re: Project No. R2005-01452-(3) Variance No. 200900001
2354 Topanga Canyon Boulevard – Significant Ridgeline

Dear Hearing Officer –

I am writing as a 21-year resident of Topanga Canyon and like many, an admirer of the scenic resources which brings protected wildlife and other appreciators of nature to this unique and special canyon community.

New development comes at a cost to the natural landscape, the wildlife and the visual beauty which are our scenic resources. It therefore must be done in a methodical and considered manner to minimize its intrusion and exist *within* the land, not *on top* of the land. This variance is a request for the structure to sit *on top* of the land.

The property at 2354 Topanga Canyon Boulevard has been scared with unpermitted grading, has encroached on protected public lands in Edelman Park and has disrupted a natural watershed and sensitive wildlife habitat. Efforts should be focused on restoring what scenic resources were adversely impacted, not proposed actions to further develop it.

The 4,000 square foot monument will deface the natural ridgeline with its structural surface walls, while blinding sunlight reflections off the glass will become intrusive to the scenic beauty. Light illumination trespass will replace a natural, darkened, silhouetted mountain landscape which also invades our protected night skies.

To approve a variance of an existing ridgeline ordinance set forth after great efforts to protect the scenic resources for future generations would be irresponsible.

It's important to protect the visual beauty which identifies the culture of the Topanga Canyon community, nurtures businesses and recreational activities, allows wildlife to thrive and provides residents a quality of life that promotes a mental and physical well-being.

We have all traveled through various towns and those that are the most unique, most memorable and most appreciated, tend to be the ones that are most preserved, most protected and most respected. Other forgotten towns or landscapes are not lost to the natural

circumstances of time, but to decisions by local leaders over the years allowing adverse development to erase what should have been protected.

Stewardship is a great privilege and when we have a scenic resource such as Topanga Canyon, it is our collective responsibility to protect it for the enjoyment of many and not allow it to be exploited for the benefit of a few.

If we lose interest in protecting the integrity of our natural landscape, we're losing interest in protecting the integrity of our wildlife, our community and our culture.

Please deny this variance.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Todd Davidovich', written over a horizontal line.

D. Todd Davidovich

Topanga Canyon, California



No house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be of the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together each the happier for the other. If you build a house on a hill, you lose the hill. – Frank Lloyd Wright

Hearing Officer
Los Angeles County Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Project No. R2005-01452-(3) Variance No. 200900001
2354 Topanga Canyon Boulevard – Significant Ridgeline

September 18th 2025

Dear Hearing Officer,

As a Veterinarian, I took an important vow to always provide my very best of energy, effort and concentrated focus for the benefit and well-being of the animals.

Regarding the above ridgeline variance request, as a 13-year resident of Topanga Canyon, I would like to speak for the unspoken, natural wildlife within our special community.

The ridgeline for the above project is located on the natural watershed that many wildlife creatures and native plants depend on. Further interference rather than restoration of the watershed stream can have an impact on the ecosystem including decreased animal populations, increased competition for resources, habitat loss and an increased susceptibility of diseases within wildlife.

As we share our homes within a natural habitat adjacent to State Parks and protected public open space lands, building a home in Topanga that has a negative impact to nature is counterintuitive and should not even be a consideration. It's important to seek a solution to live within nature for sustainability and admiration, not on top of nature with development.

On behalf of the wildlife within Topanga Canyon, we would greatly appreciate it if you will please deny this variance request.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phusita'.

Phusita Nakphairat, DVM (Dr. Pooh)

TOPANGA ASSOCIATION FOR A SCENIC COMMUNITY
PO BOX 352, TOPANGA CA 90290

Sept. 22, 2025

Regional Planning Commission

Los Angeles County

320 West Temple Street

Los Angeles, California 90012

Via Electronic Mail

Full Support of Appeal – Project No. R2005-0145-(3) – Significant Ridgeline

2354 Topanga Canyon Boulevard – Variance 200900001

Dear Planning Commissioners:

We agree completely with the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority in their letter dated September 17, 2025.

The Virgenes Homeowners Federation, The Topanga Association for a Scenic Community, The Topanga Town Council, The Topanga Chamber of Commerce all have fought for many years to protect the Santa Monica Mountains from this kind of development. It is the reason these groups supported the Ridgeline Ordinance in the first place. All to protect the Mountains from speculative development.

The Appeal must be upheld and our Parkland preserved.

Roger Pugliese

Topanga Association for a Scenic Community Chair

Topanga Town Council Board Member

Topanga Chamber of Commerce Board Member

Topanga Trash Warriors Co Head

Hearing Officer

Los Angeles County Regional Planning

320 West Temple Street Los Angeles, CA 90012

I am writing regarding project # R2005-01452-(3) Variance # 200900001 2354 Topanga Canyon Boulevard – Significant Ridgeline Development

This proposed variance for the building of a home on the ridgeline at **2354 Topanga Canyon Blvd should be denied.**

As a resident of Topanga for almost 2 decades, I have come to respect the beauty of this place... the rolling hills, sprawling meadows and volcanic mountain faces. The nature that inhabits this place, both plant and animal, is testimony to Topanga Canyon being a precious sanctuary in the middle of a county of 10 million residents.

We need to **protect this special place** and not allow it to be carved up, sold and paved over by the highest bidder. Once it's gone- it's gone forever.

This project will forever scar Topanga's ridgeline. It's proposal to cut down and pave over a rolling hillside for a massive 4,000sqft compound is not a resident building a dream home, it's an exhibition of gluttony and disregard.

The applicant has already shown no regard for existing habitat or laws- as one can plainly see the property has already been graded. Additionally, the **MRCA property encroachment** that has already happened is signaling intent to further encroach once you approve the variance.

Washington is moving to sell off public parkland to the highest bidder. Do not join them. Do not give away more. Approving this variance is equivalent to saying your fine with what this builder is doing to our Canyon and our protected MRCA land.

Homes can be built with respect for the community and the environment.

Please deny this variance,

William Alford

Topanga Resident 18 years

Trash Warriors

Arson Watch

Topanga Volunteer Fire & Forestry Department