Appendix J:

Wildlife Movement Memo

MEMORANDUM

GLENN LUKOS ASSOCIATES
Regulatory Services

PROJECT NUMBER: 1365-1CAJA

TO: Stacie Henderson (CAJA Environmental Services)

FROM: Jeff Ahrens (GLA)
Tony Bomkamp (GLA)

DATE: December 1, 2020

SUBJECT: Potential Impacts to Wildlife Movement Associated with the Proposed Development of Single-family residence at 3003 Runyon Canyon Road

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Glenn Lukos Associates (GLA) prepared responses to comments numbered A3-2 and A3-3 submitted by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for the Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). In the subject responses, GLA addressed potential impacts related to wildlife movement in the eastern portion of the Santa Monica Mountains and determined, consistent with the findings of the Biological Technical Report prepared in support of the DEIR, that the Project would not have a significant impact on wildlife movement. The purpose of this memorandum is to revisit the findings of "no significant impacts" in light of the California Fish and Game Commission vote on April 16, 2020 to designate the Southern California population of mountain lions (*Puma concolor*) as a State Candidate Endangered Species. That final determination is pending.

As reported in the DEIR, the Project site is located at 3003 Runyon Canyon Road (34.064876º N, -118.210312º W) within the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. The Project site is located as a private inholding within Runyon Canyon Park, which is a city-owned open space park located in the eastern portion of the Santa Monica Mountains. Currently, an approximate 2,018-square foot single family house occupies the roughly 4.75-acre property at the top of a steep ridgeline. An approximate 200-foot zone around the house is maintained regularly for brush clearance. The Project site is surrounded on three sides by a six-foot-high chain link fence, however, the steepest portion of the property along the southern and southeastern edge is not fenced. The proposed Project would expand the developed square footage in roughly the same footprint that an existing structure and landscaped area currently occupy.

Mountain lions use rocky areas, cliffs, and ledges that provide cover within open woodlands and chaparral, as well as riparian areas that provide protective habitat connections for movement between fragmented core habitat. Mountain lions have large home ranges with the ranges of males as larger as 250 square miles. A study in the Santa Ana Mountains found that female annual home ranges varied from 32 to 87 square miles, with a mean range of 43 square miles. The diet of mountain lions in Southern California includes mule deer as their principal prey, but also other ungulates, rabbits, raccoon, larger rodents, and sometimes carrion.

The mountain lion is known to occur throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and the surrounding region. The National Park Service (NPS) has tracked the mountain lion population in the Santa Monica Mountains region for eighteen years as this species has been negatively affected by habitat fragmentation in southern California. As mentioned above, this species requires large home ranges to sustain themselves and areas for young animals to disperse. Habitat fragmentation caused by urban development and road infrastructure acts as a barrier preventing mountain lions from moving safely between areas of suitable habitat, increases potentially fatal conflict between individuals, increases interaction between humans and lions, increases risk of vehicle strike, and reduces the population health due to inbreeding.

A male lion referred to as P-22 has resided east of the 101 Freeway in the Griffith Park area for a number of years, and several other lions including P13 and P27 (since deceased) have been tracked within the eastern portion of the Santa Monica Mountains in years past. As reported in the DEIR, Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc., conducted a habitat connectivity and wildlife permeability study for the Project area from March to April 2017 involving the use of remote wildlife cameras. The Cooper study detected mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) using the site, but it was concluded that the proposed development would not appreciably affect the movement of mule deer and other local species using the site. Unrelated to the Cooper study, in October 2017, an uncollared mountain lion was photographed by remote camera within a 17-acre plot of land within Laurel Canyon that Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW) and the Laurel Canyon Association are preserving. The distance between the Project site and the general location of the mountain lion sighting is approximately 1.5 linear miles.

Although at least one mountain lion has been documented in recent years within the general vicinity of the Project site and surrounding open space, the proposed Project is not expected to have a substantial adverse impact on wildlife movement, including mountain lions, because the proposed development will generally occupy the same development footprint that an existing structure and landscaping (including turf grass) currently occupies. In addition, the existing fencing does not surround the property and will not be expanded or modified by the proposed Project, thus allowing for the same access for wildlife as it currently provides. The lighting and windows of the proposed house have been designed to reduce nighttime light spillage and glare to reduce any potential impacts on wildlife use of the surrounding areas, including wildlife movement. Finally, the adjacent ridgelines, fire access roads, and Runyon Canyon Road will not be modified by the Project and therefore will still provide for unrestricted wildlife movement for local wildlife, including the mountain lion.

Thus, the previous conclusion in the DEIR and Responses to Comments that the Project would not result in significant impacts on mountain lion movement has not been changed based on the recent designation by the California Fish and Game Commission of Candidate for Endangered Status for the southern California population of the mountain lion.