



BARBARA FERRARO, MAYOR
JOHN CRUIKSHANK, MAYOR PRO TEM
ERIC ALEGRIA, COUNCILMEMBER
DAVID L. BRADLEY, COUNCILMEMBER
PAUL SEO, COUNCILMEMBER

June 7, 2023

The Honorable Janice Hahn
Los Angeles County 4th District Office
302 West 5th Street, #200
San Pedro, CA 90731

SUBJECT: Portuguese Bend Landslide (PBL) Remediation Project - Funding Request

Dear Supervisor Hahn:

First and foremost, I would like to express our gratitude for the support and encouragement we received from the County of Los Angeles when your office toured the landslide in July 2022 and when you sent a support letter in December 2022 for the City's FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant application for the PBL Remediation Project.

I am now writing to formally request urgent funding in the amount of \$6,000,000 on behalf of the City Council and the residents of Rancho Palos Verdes and the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The PBL originated in 1956 when construction of an extension of Crenshaw Boulevard caused the displacement of thousands of tons of soil onto a previously inactive landslide zone.

This ongoing landslide presents a continuous threat, with an average annual horizontal movement between approximately 6 to 15 feet and average annual vertical movement between 0.5 to 1.5 feet, depending on the location. Remediation tactics must be taken to slow this movement. It is commonly known as one of the largest and fastest continuously moving landslides in North America.

The purpose of this funding request is to address the significant public safety and long-standing environmental threat posed by the Portuguese Bend Landslide.

1. Preservation of Palos Verdes Drive South:

Palos Verdes Drive South, an arterial road and evacuation route with over 14,000 vehicles per day, traverses through the landslide area. Despite City expenditures of approximately \$1 million annually for repairs and resurfacing, the road, sitting on wet soil, remains vulnerable to land movement. Losing this vital heavily travelled route due to sudden landslide movement would force drivers to detour an additional 15 miles, significantly impacting travel times, emergency vehicle response times, and evacuation routes for Peninsula residents.

2. Protection of Sewer Lines:

Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts main sewer trunk lines, servicing approximately 8,900 Peninsula homes, run alongside Palos Verdes Drive South through the landslide area. These sewer lines require constant adjustments and monitoring as the land shifts beneath them. A rupture in the sewer lines could result in untreated sewage reaching environmentally and biologically sensitive areas, including tidepools, pristine beaches, and protected lands including the state-designated Abalone Cove Ecological Reserve, while also potentially displacing thousands of residents until repairs are completed.

4. Resolution of Property Disputes and Damages:

The ongoing land movement has caused significant property damage and disputes among residents in the PBL Complex. Structures have shifted from their original and legally entitled placements, crossing property lines. The movement of improvements has caused property line and trespass disputes among new and long-standing residents including legal actions. The resolution of these property disputes and damages are necessary to mitigate the challenges faced by affected homeowners. Additionally, homeowners have seen cracks in walls, rooflines, and foundations because of the movement.

To address these pressing concerns, after a series of public workshops involving various stakeholders including a team of geotechnical engineers, the City has developed a concept design that offers a feasible solution. The proposed approach focuses on two key aspects to reducing land movement: preventing surface water from infiltrating the ground and extracting existing water from the ground – water being the primary culprit to this public health and safety issue. This is achieved by infilling fissures in the ground, preventing percolation of surface run-off water by conveying it to the ocean through drainage swales, and installing horizontally drilled wells (hydraugers) to extract ground water from the water table. These approaches have been proven to be successful in several other landslides including the City's Abalone Cove area.

The City is faced with a dire situation that demands immediate attention. As reported on the front page of the Los Angeles Times on March 6, "The geological phenomenon

has wreaked havoc on a 240-acre area over the past seven decades, resulting in alarming consequences. The land has experienced substantial fissures, causing homes to strain, buckle, and even wander onto neighboring properties. This ongoing catastrophe poses an imminent threat to our community.”

Adding to the urgency, there have been many water main breaks, gas line leaks, and leaning power poles in the Portuguese Bend area. While temporary repairs are made on a regular basis, the situation is untenable.

The remediation project’s preliminary cost is estimated at approximately \$33 million. As noted earlier, the City applied for FEMA’s BRIC grant program and must provide a non-federal match of 30% (\$10 million). The City anticipates receiving word on the BRIC grant application in Fall, 2023.

We cannot afford to waste any more time. We implore our federal, state, and county representatives to step in and allocate the necessary attention and resources to address this regional crisis. The gravity of the situation requires immediate action, as every passing moment brings us closer to irreparable consequences.

The City urgently requests your unwavering support in expediting the completion and assisting in the funding of this crucial public health and safety project. It is of utmost importance that swift action is taken before it is too late. The safety and well-being of our community are at stake.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request. Should you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or City Manager Ara Mihranian. We eagerly anticipate a positive response and the opportunity to collaborate in addressing this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Barbara Ferraro
Mayor, City of Rancho Palos Verdes

Cc: Rancho Palos Verdes City Council and City Manager
Jennifer LaMarque, Field Representative District 4