

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

APPROVED
JUN 04 2008

NO. 08-151

DATE June 4, 2008

**BOARD OF RECREATION
and PARK COMMISSIONERS**

C.D. 4

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: RUNYON CANYON PARK – FULLER ENTRANCE PARKING AREA (#1358A)
(W.O. #E1904613) - ADOPTION OF REVISED MITIGATED NEGATIVE
DECLARATION AND APPROVAL OF PROJECT

R. Adams _____	J. Kolb _____
H. Fujita _____	F. Mok _____
S. Huntley _____	K. Regan _____
V. Israel _____	M. Shull _____

M. Shull

[Signature]
General Manager

Approved AS AMENDED

Disapproved _____

Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Review, consider and adopt the revised Initial Study (IS) and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Runyon Canyon Park - Fuller Entrance Parking Area (#1358A) (W.O. #E1904613) project, finding that on the basis of the whole record of proceedings in the project, including the IS/MND and any comments received, that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment, and all potentially significant environmental effects of the project have been properly disclosed, evaluated, and mitigated in the IS/MND in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State and City CEQA Guidelines, and reflects the Board's independent judgment and analysis;
2. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan published as part of the MND that specifies the mitigation measures to be implemented in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15074(d)); *and,*
3. Direct staff to file a Notice of Determination for the adopted IS/MND with the Los Angeles City Clerk and the Los Angeles County Clerk within five days of the Board's approval; *and,*
4. *Approve the project subject to the conditions stated in the MND.*

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 2 NO. 08-151

SUMMARY:

The Runyon Canyon Park is a 134-acre regional park stretching from Hollywood to Mulholland Drive. It provides a rare and unique urban wilderness experience for hiking, jogging and walking, while offering a spectacular panoramic view of the city. It is also one of the largest off-leash dog parks in the region. Since its formal dedication in 1999, the Runyon Canyon Park, with its appeal as a nature oasis in the middle of the urban environment, has gained immense popularity and attracted visitors from all over the region. However, the surge of patron usage has resulted in negative impacts on the neighborhood, including heavy vehicular traffic as visitors arriving in cars searching for street parking, and allegations by community members of constant stench from dog waste on the residential streets leading to the park entrance. Many negative impacts can be attributed to the lack of on-site parking. The City has recognized that a regional park without the provision of on-site parking is a deficiency that needs to be remedied immediately.

Consistent with the 1984 "Runyon Canyon Park Master Plan and Design Guidelines", as well as the Department's "Off-Leash Dog Exercise Area Policy" adopted by the Board (Board Report No. 382-99) on October 6, 1999, the scope of the proposed improvements at the Fuller Avenue entrance include the following:

1. A gravel-based parking area to accommodate up to 80 cars, featuring a low-impact and permeable surface that is both ecologically sensitive and environmentally friendly. The parking area's tiered or terraced design takes advantage of the gentle slope of the site and allows the parking area to nestle into the existing grade and blend with the natural terrain, and minimizes grading work. The terraced parking area will also help break up the mass and scale, and enhance the aesthetics of the park. In addition to providing the much needed increase in parking to the park patrons, the parking area is also designed to help minimize water runoff and control erosion.
2. The existing open lawn area will be relocated to a new area above the proposed parking area. The new open lawn area will feature the same size and amenities as the existing one, including a 4-foot high fence and landscaping along the perimeters. All larger trees will be preserved to provide shade in the new open lawn area.
3. The existing roadway inside the park will be widened to provide sufficient width to accommodate two-way vehicular traffic.

The proposed parking area and the relocated open lawn area are approximately 26,000 square feet and 18,000 square feet in size, respectively, for a total of 44,000 square feet. The size of the proposed parking area represents less than one half of 1% in area of the 134-acre park. In addition, the proposed parking area and the relocated open lawn area are outside the designated off-leash dog exercise area; and therefore the proposed improvement work does not reduce the size of the existing

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 3 NO. 08-151

off-leash dog exercise area. The existing open lawn area will remain open while the new one is being constructed. The new open lawn area will be completed and opened to the public before the existing one is demolished to make room for the new parking area construction, so that there will be no interruption to the recreational activities being carried out in the open lawn area.

Based on the findings of a study conducted in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, the existing concrete ruins and remnants from the former McCormack mansion located to the north of site of the proposed parking area are not historically significant under the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) criteria, but may potentially be deemed significant under the local Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (LAHCM) criteria. The existing concrete ruins and remnants once associated with the former McCormack mansion will not be disturbed and will remain in situ, therefore the proposed parking area project would not create a significant effect on historical resources.

It was necessary to amend the Project Agreement (Proposition A-I, Grant No. 58F6-94-0204) with the County of Los Angeles (County) to add the aforementioned improvements at the park's Fuller Avenue entrance to the project scope. The revised project scope was approved by the L.A. for Kids Steering Committee on October 7, 2004, and adopted by the City Council (Council File No. 04-2440) on December 8, 2004. The County has also executed a Project Agreement Amendment to reflect the revised scope.

In accordance with the requirements of the CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project which was adopted by the Board on September 20, 2006 (Board Report No. 06-276). A Notice of Determination (NOD) was filed with the Office of the County Clerk on September 21, 2006. However, on September 28, 2006, the Office of the City Clerk accepted an appeal to the City Council relative to the Board's action in adopting the MND. The appeal, based on CEQA Section 21151(c), sought to have an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the project, and alleged that the project would result in the following unmitigated significant environmental effects: noise, including project noise and construction noise; aesthetics; historical resources; air quality; biological resources; wildlife impacts including impacts to wildlife from noise, night lighting and odors; transportation including increased traffic on access roads and pedestrian safety within the park; water quality impacts from runoff; police services at night; and increased park use.

BOE staff reviewed the appeal and the MND previously adopted by the Board, and believed that with the exception of construction noise, none of the impacts alleged in the appeal would be significant, including those impacts already subject to mitigation in the MND previously adopted by the Board. Further, staff believed that the potentially significant impact due to construction noise could be mitigated. As such, in response to the appeal, BOE submitted a report to the City Council recommending that the City Council:

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 4 NO. 08-151

1. Grant the CEQA Section 21151(c) appeal of the MND as to construction noise only; and,
2. Direct BOE staff to prepare and recirculate a revised MND and a revised Initial Study and Checklist for the project that analyzes and proposes mitigation for construction noise.

On October 16, 2007, the City Council referred the appeal (Council File Index No. 06-2512) to the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee. At its meeting held on December 5, 2007, the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee conducted a public hearing on the appeal, and after consideration of the staff reports and recommendations and the public testimony, submitted a report to the City Council recommending approval of BOE's recommendations. On December 12, 2007, the City Council voted 13-0 to adopt the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee Report relative to the appeal.

A public notice was published on the January 24, 2008 edition of the Los Angeles Times, announcing the availability of the draft revised MND for public review. The draft revised MND was released on January 25, 2008 for a 30-day public comment period which concluded on February 29, 2008. A final revised MND has been prepared, consisting of the draft revised MND, public comments received, and staff responses to all relevant environmental issues raised. The final revised MND and Initial Study are attached to this report for the Board's review, consideration, and adoption.

Council District 4 and Griffith Region staff support the recommendations as set forth in this Report.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

The project is funded by Proposition A-I and Quimby funds. Therefore, there is no anticipated immediate fiscal impact to the Department's General Fund. The cost to relocate the open lawn area has yet to be determined, and will be borne by the Department's current operations and maintenance budget. Future operations and maintenance costs will be included in the Department's future annual budget requests.

Prepared by Paul Tseng, Project Manager, Architectural Division Bureau of Engineering and Irene Paul, BOE Environmental Management Group. Reviewed by Neil Drucker, Program Manager, Recreational and Cultural Facilities Program, Bureau of Engineering; Deborah Weintraub, Chief Deputy City Engineer, Bureau of Engineering; and, Michael A. Shull, Superintendent, Planning and Development Division, Department of Recreation and Parks.