

Griffith Park Advisory Board Meeting

Draft Minutes

August 25, 2022

6:30pm

Greenwald, Crames, Laib, Ashouri, Chung, Crow, Gilbert, Thornton present

1. **Board announcements** None
2. **Minutes** One correction-Griffith Park Drive closure to compost area. Phillips, first/Crow/second. 6 approve, Crames and Ashouri abstain, due to absence from meeting. Note: There were 9 public emails sent via email, distributed to board for review prior to the meeting. All dealt with transit issues in GP, 8 in support of closure of Griffith Park Dr.
3. **Reports from Government Officials**

CD4: Deputies Scheps and Rotolo

-“Thank you” to all who came to *Train Town* transportation presentation, celebrating Assembly person Friedman’s \$4m Griffith Park transportation earmark and the closure of Griffith Park Dr. And, commendation to RAP for the speed exercised to get transportation safety improvements executed.

-The LA Zoo has expanded public comment period for their EIR to 9/23 and another public mtg will be held on 9/12 6pm via zoom.

Board questions

Phillips: Riverside bike path obstacles cleared? Xanthe: The council office is working on shrinking the camping footprint. The Hyperion Bridge encampment was cleared. \$1.7m grant to help with the Bridge Homes on Riverside Dr has been acquired.

General Public Comment

-Sheila Irani: Fencing is needed adjacent to Lake Hollywood park, for a fallow downslope parcel. Smoking and fireworks a problem. Fencing needs to continue to Arrowhead Dr and close the gap into the brush area. HUNC has gotten a 25k bid. Would like RAP to get this done. Was referred by chair Greenwald to safety ad hoc.

-Marian Dodge for FOGP: P22 day is on 10/22 at park central

-Emmy Goldknopf: Filming should not take place during Shakespeare in the Park performances. Sierra Club also leads hikes in this area and it has been very congested. Could the filming schedule be posted so there aren’t calendaring conflicts

-Seth, a Los Feliz resident: Riverside Dr and Los Feliz Bl issues with crime and Bridge Home; advocating for a special enforcement zone

-Elizabeth: Riverside Dr is frustrating and the neighbors are disappointed in CD 4’s inability to manage the crime. Tents, gangs, drug dealing and bike lane blockage. Regular RV parks there and dumps their sewage. Must be cleaned up. It is a public safety issue

-Finn: A fire at Mulholland fountain by transients last Sunday. Need more eyes on the area.

5. Information Reports and Presentations

-Haunted Hayride

Griffith Park Superintendent Smith introduces event manager, Tim Pugsley. Last year's event was successful, there's a financial benefit to Haunted Hayride, and those revenues improve Griffith Park. Board of Commissioners will decide on 9/1 whether the *Haunted Hayride* comes back. 2022 dates: 9/5 load in; finished 11/5

-Pugsley: VP of Operations, *13th Floor Entertainment*. "I'm committed to making the event better". They have implemented a new shuttle team, new security team. He shared screen of location area of Haunted Hayride, which is adjacent to Pote Field.

Board Questions

Thornton: "Thank You" for fences. Event was better last year.

Laib: How much revenue is generated to RAP and does it stay in Griffith Park?

Smith: 234k + 25k deposit + staff reimbursement+ ticket percentage; the revenue stays in Griffith Park.

-Phillips: Trash seems to stay after event; Smith: RAP is increasing clean up staff

Public Comment

-Laura Howe: 2 months of time in park; starting on Labor Day, is impactful. Audio speakers hanging from sycamores is stressful for them. Confusing for runners whether the event area is accessible to them

-Emmy Goldknopf: Large traffic Impact on Crystal Springs Dr and the ranger station area was a choke point; that should be better focused this year

Pugsley: The Crystal Springs Dr intersection is for shuttle access only. We're throwing more resources at it. We are shrinking the event time frame and 9/5 will be only for minimal drop offs. Signage will be better for ingress/egress. Working on making picnic areas more accessible Smith: Forestry will be attending the upcoming walk thru and she will make sure impact on the large trees will be on the schedule

-Jason: Stefanie is setting stronger conditions and has shared she feels that Pugsley and his team are doing a better job; public concerns can be emailed to Stefanie directly

-LA Zoo Focused Recirculated EIR

Chair Greenwald: GPAB has spent hundreds of hours on this issue. We voted unanimously over a year ago, at beginning of the process, to focus our voices on transportation issues, based on the *Vision for Griffith Park* and our charter. We felt that was where we had the strongest footing. We opted to support option 2. We've had extensive dialogue with various Zoo executives since then, with good access to them. Alternative 1.5 has now been forwarded. The footprint of the project has shrunk, tram and parking structure eliminated; and this plan makes an attempt to manage traffic. It falls short as follows:

-Additional 750k visitors arriving primarily by private vehicle, which is contrary to work by GPAB, CD4 and RAP to reduce private vehicle trips in park
-Online reservation claims to reduce visitors, but their analysis does not support that representation
-Lack of traffic metric accountability measurements in plan
The mobility and transportation ad hoc believes that our board should request (screen share)

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Proposed GPAB requests re: LA Zoo Vision Plan EIR Alternative 1.5

- Specific VMT commitments, ideally 15 percent as outlined in Alternative 2, or some reasonable compromise if policy-makers determine that is truly not possible.
- Maximum car capacity limits – with input from the LA Department of Transportation (DOT) – to support the Zoo’s claims regarding the overall vehicle impacts under the PVMP; far greater specificity regarding commitments to be made under this program.
- Specific multi-modal commitments – beyond language already included in the Project’s mitigation measure MM T-2 – for Parkline Shuttle, Metro buses & bike infrastructure.
- Oversight from LA DOT in guiding and assessing both the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and the PVMP.
- Any additional specific accountability measures that will give this board and the public confidence that the Zoo is doing its part to contribute toward alternate transportation while adequately mitigating the impact of hundreds of thousands of additional private vehicle trips each year.

Committee member Ashouri: Suggests that the board readdress our original scope and moves to table a letter until the next meeting and any letter be

released with our agenda; and that she believes there is an incorrectness about public posting of our letters in general.

Committee member Phillips: Comments due day after our next meeting. Not feasible

-A vigorous board discussion ensued.

Board Questions

Laib: We don't have time to readdress our original approach to this and open it back up. Phillips clarifies that we have only 1 day after our next board mtg to produce a response. Approval must be done this meeting

Crow: Why aren't we taking a stronger stand on expansion? Greenwald: We have respected the Zoo's right to expand inside its footprint. We agreed years ago, as a practicality to approach the transportation issues-that was the area where there is greatest impact to park, and core to our mission.

-A vigorous board conversation ensued.

Greenwald: Requests a Rosenberg Rules clarification to Tracy/Stefanie. Smith: We will report back next meeting.

Crames: Comfortable moving forward

Public Comment

-Howe: Do not approve 1.5, which does not go far enough. Built space is for large events, which impacts the wildlife in the park and destroys wild habitat

-Kathryn Louyse: How will the roadway plan effect the areas around zoo

-Marian Dodge: Our recommendation to reduce vehicles is noble. However, Condor Canyon is impactful and GPAB should address that

-Emmy G: I share the concerns of other speakers

Board redirect

Motion

(screen shared)

I move that we write a comment letter detailing our board's continued concerns as follows:

1. We wish to enlist the Zoo, along with other City of LA departments and policy-makers, in furthering a vision of Griffith Park with fewer cars, more transit & greater accessibility.
2. While the Zoo cannot solve all of GP's transportation issues, they must do their part, especially since they intend to add 750,000 visitors per year.
3. While we are pleased with some changes – less development, more preservation, no aerial tram – we find the Zoo's new proposal, Alternative 1.5, to be insufficient.
4. We have specific concerns, to be outlined and detailed in a supplemental document, about Alternative 1.5's proposed transportation program.
5. The Zoo previously presented a viable transportation approach as part of Alternative 2 (which we endorsed).
6. Building on the new Alternative 1.5 as a starting point, we seek the following:
 - Specific VMT commitments, ideally 15 percent as outlined in Alternative 2, or some reasonable compromise if policy-makers determine that is truly not possible.
 - Maximum car capacity limits – with input from the LA Department of Transportation (DOT) – to support the Zoo's claims regarding the overall vehicle impacts under the PVMP; far greater specificity regarding commitments to be made under this program.
 - Specific multi-modal commitments – beyond language already included in the Project's mitigation measure MM T-2 – for Parkline Shuttle, Metro buses & bike infrastructure.
 - Oversight from LA DOT in guiding and assessing both the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and the PVMP.
 - Any additional specific accountability measures that will give this board and the public confidence that the Zoo is doing its part to contribute toward alternate transportation while adequately mitigating the impact of hundreds of thousands of additional private vehicle trips each year.
7. We approach transportation from the standpoint of equity, accessibility & sustainability. The City of Los Angeles aspires to greatness in each of these areas. Right here in Griffith Park, big changes are underway: additional bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure; fewer lanes of vehicle travel; an emphasis on building transit options for all Angelenos. We urge the Zoo to join our efforts, and we offer our partnership in finding solutions. But make no mistake: Our support of Alternative 1.5 will be possible only if Zoo officials revise their transportation plan in line with the principles outlined in this letter.

-Greenwald: Moves to approve drafting a letter based on the above principles, reflecting the work of the transit and mobility ad hoc committee

Board discussion

- Ashouri: Procedural questions re process
- Laib: Clarification on transit/mobility committee process and points out that our board business style is to rely on committee recommendations
- Chung: Would like to amend and add a comment re the impact of the expansion on environment
- Crow: The entire park does carry an urban wilderness identity
- Ashouri: Read from EIR re relocation of wildlife and impact on park
- Gilbert: Mentions *A Vision for Griffith Park* and that we should add an environment comment

Ashouri proposes an amendment, seconded by Crampton, which adds an element regarding environment, in addition to the primary focus on transportation

Vote on amendment

Unanimous 9-0

Vote on Motion

Unanimous 9-0

Chair Greenwald will lead the draft of the letter, with input from the mobility and transit ad hoc committee

6. Superintendent Report

Stephanie Smith, GP Superintendent

- No Covid protocol changes
- Old Zoo fencing is 90% done
- Bronson Caves, LF plunge and the Merry Go Round are still closed
- Travel Town lot is now opened at 6am; the dirt lot due south is behind the closure and no longer usable
- There will be a Town Hall mtg at Friendship Hall on 9/8 re: road improvements; it may be in person
- Light towers are now installed at CSD and Ranger Headquarters
- The *Shakespeare in the Park* season ends in early Sept
- Car break ins increased in park; hot spots at Pony Ride, Greek shuttle location and golf courses
- Suicide in park next to park offices

Board questions

- Thornton: LA Film needs to come to board Smith: Yes, we will have them to upcoming mtg
- Ashouri: Why is there Bee Rock ticketing for rock climbing? Smith: It is closed only during bird nesting season each year, with good signage and ticketing is only to violators of closure

Committee Reports

-Executive Committee: Greenwald

Park line shuttle conversation, and that the LA Shares and Bridge Home site should be part of a vision for south GP

-Community Engagement ad hoc committee: Phillips

No report; Alex Crow may want to takeover chairing

-Safety ad hoc committee: Laib

Due to numerous safety inquiries and complaints about the area south of Los Feliz Bl and west of Riverside Dr, the committee met there, and determined it to have safety and fire hazards. We have several recommendations, as follows: Clean up of dead tree and plant matter at foot of the incline below Waverly Dr residential areas. Better security at Bridge Home, clearing of new bike path from camping debris, possible community garden in the unoccupied large area south of Bridge Home. In general, the whole area is now a large, unoccupied space, attracting bad actors that prey on the Bridge Home inhabitants. There are also day campers and smokers who simply wander into the unoccupied spaces.

Board Comments

Greenwald: Safety assigned to inquire of RAP re community garden

Ashouri: LFNC might support a community garden

Scheps: TY to safety committee for meeting there with CD4

-Transit and Mobility ad hoc committee: Greenwald

Report given during zoo special presentation

-Equestrian ad hoc committee: Thornton

No report

Adjournment at 9:13pm. Crames first/ Thornton second. Unanimous

Next meeting is 9/22 at 6:30 pm via Zoom