



Griffith Park Advisory Board
“Citizen Stewards of L.A.’s Premiere Urban Wilderness and Park”
Department of Recreation and Parks, City of Los Angeles

October 2, 2020

City of Los Angeles Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners
CC: Mike Hain
CC: Stephanie Smith
CC: Councilmember David Ryu

Re: Proposed Aerial Transit System for Griffith Park

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to express our opposition to an aerial transit system (ATS) for Griffith Park, and to share our rationale for opposing it. Based on our recent meeting with the feasibility project team and our deliberations that followed, we have reached the conclusion that an ATS will not meet the needs of our city, its great urban park, or the park’s many stakeholders. In fact, we find that such a project would diminish the character of Griffith Park as an urban wilderness, and could threaten the well-being of the park’s flora and fauna. As a result, the Griffith Park Advisory Board recommends that city officials not pursue an ATS.

As you are well aware, the important issues of transit and mobility in and around the park require thoughtful solutions. This board fully supports the goal of reducing and eventually eliminating private vehicles from Griffith Park. If we had reason to believe that an ATS would move the park toward that goal, we would consider it for more rigorous study. Yet during their presentation to our board on September 24th, members of the Stantec / Consensus project team acknowledged that the proposed ATS would not meaningfully reduce traffic inside Griffith Park.

Further, while the project team stated that an ATS could help alleviate traffic in some of the heavily impacted neighborhoods around the park, they made clear that the ATS would be only a partial solution to that problem. And with the lead engineer stating that the price could be between \$50-100 million – not to mention other estimates that are even higher – we believe it is incumbent upon city officials to explore less costly, time-consuming and controversial strategies to meet this worthy goal. The Dixon report in January 2018 laid out 29 ideas to address access, mobility and related issues, and the City Council endorsed nearly two dozen for further study. Yet among these many ideas, few have received as much scrutiny or funding as the proposed ATS. We would ask city officials to prioritize other solutions that may provide faster, better and less-costly ways to meet policy-makers’ goals.

Additionally, there remain important considerations related to the overall character of Griffith Park. Many stakeholders have expressed deep concern about the idea of a gondola ride serving tourists that would

forever change the urban wilderness of Griffith Park. We share those concerns, and fail to see an overriding policy objective to outweigh them.

Having laid out our main reasons for opposing the ATS, we want to assure you that we have not done so lightly. We are aware that city officials have committed a large expenditure on a feasibility study, and we have participated in that study with all due diligence. Last fall, our board unanimously approved a set of principles and issues to guide our review of any ATS proposal and shared it with the Feasibility Study's team. A majority of our members has concluded that the project team did not adequately address our requests, and that the merits of an ATS project do not outweigh its flaws. While a few of our members would have preferred to see more data prior to making a decision to support an ATS or not, a strong majority agreed we had sufficient data to reach a conclusion now.

In closing, we appreciate that city funds are at a premium, and ought to be directed toward those services and solutions that serve an essential need. We do not believe that an ATS for Griffith Park would serve such a need, and we urge you to prioritize other policy solutions. We respectfully recommend that the ATS be retired from consideration.

Sincerely,

Ron Deutsch
Chair – Griffith Park Advisory Board

Laura Howe
Vice Chair

Jason Greenwald
ATS ad hoc committee chair

BOARD MEMBERS:

*Chip Clements, Michelle Cramos, Gene Gilbert, Mike Hain,
Laura Howe, Sheila Irani, Bryan Mercke, Lucinda Phillips*