

**BOARD REPORT**DATE September 09, 2016NO. 16-186C.D. 4**BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS**

SUBJECT: GRIFFITH PARK – INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (IS/MND) FOR THE PROPOSED GRIFFITH PARK/OBSERVATORY CIRCULATION AND PARKING ENHANCEMENT PLAN – FINDINGS FOR ALL POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA); IMPLEMENTATION OF IS/MND'S MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH CEQA GUIDELINES [SECTION 15074(D)]

AP Diaz _____
R. Barajas _____
H. Fujita _____

V. Israel _____
*K. Regan KR
N. Williams _____


General Manager

Approved ✓ Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consider the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), herein included as Attachment 1 and posted on the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) website, www.laparks.org, for the proposed Griffith Park/Observatory Circulation and Parking Enhancement Plan (Project), together with any comments received during the public review process;
2. Find that the IS/MND reflects the independent judgment of RAP;
3. Find that the Project as mitigated will not have a significant environmental effect;
4. Adopt the IS/MND and Mitigation Monitoring Program of the IS/MND that specifies the mitigation measures to be implemented in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(d);
5. Specify that the documents and materials that constitute the record of proceedings for the Project are located in the Office of Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (Board Office) and that the Board Office is the custodian of these documents and materials;
6. Approve the Project as described in the IS/MND;

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7. Approve a \$4.00 per hour parking fee at the Griffith Observatory parking lot, on West and East observatory Roads, and along Western Canyon Road, and;
8. Authorize RAP's Chief Accounting Employee to create the appropriate account(s) (to be determined) to record the financial transaction for this fee.

SUMMARY

Griffith Park is one of the largest municipal parks in the nation, approximately 4,300 acres in size. The Park was established in 1896 by the donation of private land owned by Colonel Griffith J. Griffith to the City of Los Angeles and is under the jurisdiction of RAP. RAP is currently proposing the development of a Griffith Observatory Circulation and Parking Enhancement Plan (CPEP). RAP retained the following project consultants:

- 1) Cale America, Inc. is the contractor for the overall Project.
- 2) Dixon Resources Unlimited (DIXON), a parking and transportation consultant, was retained by Cale America, Inc. to manage the Project implementation.
- 3) Iteris, Inc., a traffic engineering firm, was also retained by Cale America, Inc. to perform the traffic and circulation impact analysis for the potential road configuration changes.
- 4) Amec Foster Wheeler plc, an environmental engineering company, was retained by Cale America, Inc. to conduct the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis and prepare the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND).
- 5) Pictoform was retained by Cale America, Inc. to prepare wayfinding and parking/transportation branding plans.

In recent years, Griffith Park has become an increasingly popular destination for tourists and locals alike. Whether to visit the Griffith Observatory, to admire the spectacular vistas of the City and the Hollywood Sign, or to experience the multitude of hiking trails, the impacts on Griffith Park have been significant. The result of the increased visitation on a near daily basis has impacted traffic congestion, increased parking demand, and created safety concerns for visitors, bicyclists and pedestrians. The traffic congestion and parking issues have filtered into the surrounding neighborhoods, making it difficult for residents to come and go from their homes. Given the issues and concerns, significant changes must take place to ensure the future safety and efficiency of Griffith Park.

The proposed CPEP includes the monetization of parking near the Griffith Observatory, the introduction of a shuttle circulator system for visitors to more efficiently navigate the park, the reconfiguration of the current traffic circulation pattern, and an overall enhancement to the wayfinding and signage throughout the park. The objective of the CPEP is to lessen the traffic impact within the Park, make it easier to navigate, and encourage public multi-modal accessibility. Protecting the natural environment and urban wilderness identity by using transportation alternatives, including the potential expansion of shuttle services, is aligned with the Vision for Griffith Park (Board Report No. 13-307). It is in the public interest to make access to Griffith Park as equitable and accessible for all community members, visitors, and tourists alike. Expanding DASH and shuttle services to the Griffith Observatory and Griffith Park in

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general is complimentary to the Mayor's goals toward a sustainable City. Reducing cars by offering alternative modes of transit is the focal point of the CPEP.

All parking revenues will be used to support Griffith Park. Primarily, revenues will be steered towards shuttling and traffic improvements; however, revenues may also be used to increase Park Ranger security, hire a park biologist, increase maintenance staffing, provide infrastructure repairs, improve motorist directional signs, and expand traffic control staff to support the program.

The park and shuttle idea is well received by large cities throughout the world. In the United States, the National Park Service has published a Congestion Management Tool Kit (March 2014) that focuses solely on traffic mitigation, parking and shuttling. Portland Oregon's Washington Park has a parking and shuttle program that closely parallels RAP's intent with the CPEP.

RAP has involved key stakeholders and community engagement throughout the development of the CPEP. Beginning in December 2015, the outreach plan was expanded to include presentation to the Griffith Park Advisory Board (GPAB), Council District 4, as well as two Town Hall Community Meetings.

The MND was published in the Los Angeles Times on January 21, 2016 and the review ended March 11, 2016. The stakeholder/community feedback and MND public commentary has been received and extensively reviewed and resulted in some adjustments to the CPEP, including the removal of the proposed Mt. Hollywood viewpoint shuttle service and the expansion of convenient transportation alternatives for visitors that include the Metro Red Line and DASH.

Highlights of the CPEP include:

Monetization of parking

1. Implement a pay-to-park fee of \$4.00 per hour at the Griffith Observatory parking lot, on West and East Observatory Roads and along Western Canyon Road.
2. Install solar-powered pay stations at the Griffith Observatory parking lot, on West and East Observatory Roads and along Western Canyon Road.
3. Implement a pay-by-phone service to be integrated with all pay stations.

Roadway configuration changes

1. Eliminate two-way traffic from the Observatory Loop on East & West Observatory Road.
2. Reconfigure West Observatory Road as a one-way traffic flow towards the Griffith Observatory, with angled-parking on the sidewalk side of the road.

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3. Create a one-way traffic loop by opening access on East Observatory Road to one-way traffic from the Observatory towards Vermont Canyon Road with angled-parking on the hill side of the road.

Shuttle/DASH Service

1. Utilizing funds generated through the monetization of parking to support a DASH Bus to transport park visitors from the MTA Red Line Station at Sunset and Vermont to the Griffith Observatory.
2. Implement a traffic control plan that proactively manages vehicle access to the Observatory Loop in order to ensure more direct, fast and efficient access for DASH Bus services.
3. Enhance the passenger pick up location and signage near the Greek Theater parking lot to encourage a park & ride model.
4. Expand the current weekend DASH Bus service schedule to seven (7) days a week from the Sunset Vermont Red Line to the Griffith Observatory.

Wayfinding and branding

1. Implement new and updated wayfinding signage throughout the immediate project area.
 - a. Provide links to alternate and public transportation services.
2. Re-launch the Griffith Park website to promote awareness and transportation alternatives for visitors.

The first implementation phase will also include the installation of integrated traffic counting technology that will allow Park staff to manage vehicle access to the Griffith Observatory loop to ensure the effectiveness of the DASH Bus service to the Griffith Observatory. The next implementation phase will include the redesign of the roadway configuration and the implementation of paid parking near and around the Griffith Observatory. The intent is to have this phase of the CPEP installed and operational in time for the 2016 Thanksgiving and winter breaks.

All other implementation phases will be incrementally added as traffic mitigation measures along Los Feliz Boulevard are implemented. The IS/MND will have detailed information on the proposed traffic mitigation measures.

TREES AND SHADE:

There will be no impact to trees or shade within the project area.

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CEQA CLEARANCE

In accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a IS/MND was prepared for the project. The IS/MND analyzes all potentially significant environmental effects and imposes mitigation so that all potentially significant effects are mitigated to a less than significant level. The IS/MND was circulate to all interested parties and responsible agencies for a fifty (50) day review and comments period from January 21, 2016 to March 11, 2016. During this public review period a total of seventy (70) e-mails and/or letters with comments on the IS/MND were received. All comments have been addressed and incorporated into the final IS/MND for the Board's review and consideration. The comments resulted in minor changes in the IS/MND, and these changes have been shown in the various sections of the final IS/MND. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program has been prepared that specifies all mitigation measures identified in the IS/MND, which will either eliminate or reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts of the project to a level less than significant, in accordance with Section 15097 of the State CEQA Guidelines. The mitigation measures included in the IS/MND and Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program will be implemented prior to and during construction, as applicable, to mitigate impacts. Long term mitigation measures are noted in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (see Attachment 2).

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The long term goal of the CPEP is to be self-sustaining. There will be an initial expenditure of \$300,000.00 to redesign roadway, purchase the hardware and technology necessary to monetize the parking areas; however, it is estimated that the annual revenue will be approximately \$1.5 million dollars.

This Report was prepared by Joe Salaices, Superintendent, Griffith Region.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Initial Study mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND)
- 2) Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- 3) Responses to IS/MND Comments
- 4) Letter of Support from Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- 5) Letter of Support from Hollywood United Neighborhood Council
- 6) Letter of Support from Los Angeles Department of Transportation
- 7) Letter of Support from the Los Angeles Fire Department
- 8) Letter of Support from the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
- 9) Letter of Support from Lake Hollywood Homeowners Association
- 10) Letter of Support from The Hollywood Sign Trust
- 11) Letter of Support from Los Feliz Neighborhood Council