

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:17 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: No zoo. Conserve the natural habitat. The coyotes and foxes are already forced into the city. Ban the zoo. No animals in prison. Save the natural habitat. Keep animals in nature.

Communication from Public

Name: Adrine Arakelian
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:33 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am absolutely opposed to the LA Zoo Expansion as presented in Alternative 1.5. As a lifelong resident of Los Feliz, I value the zoo and its educational programming, however our native habitats are already imperiled and dwindling even further. Griffith Parks's native habitat houses countless native species and provided a home for P-22 for over a decade. This park was donated as parkland and it is a violation of its original intent to continue to further erode the habitat and scenic ridgelines of one of the largest urban wilderness areas in the world. The LA Zoo can meet its needs and prevent further degradation of native habitat. They need to alter their proposal. Here is a list of my continued concerns: 1. Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon, a significant geological feature, is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically. 2. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. It should be designed to blend into the landscape not take over. Many cities have ordinances protecting their ridgelines and requiring development to be located away from ridgelines. Why has this not been required here? 3. Despite the Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs. As a concerned city resident who cares for our native habitat and wildlife, and a daily visitor to our beloved Griffith Park, we must insist that the LA Zoo do more to conserve, respect, and not destroy our beloved Griffith Park. Over the many years of the Park's existence there have been many poorly conceived plans that could have altered it drastically and negatively impacted sensitive habitat areas forever. Luckily many of those plans never got realized and Griffith Park has remained the singular urban wilderness that it is. Let's make sure that the LA Zoo respects this unique asset, one of the few spaces like this in the world, and redesigns this project which will negatively impact the scenic and natural resource areas of Griffith Park. Please do not approve this project as it is currently being proposed. Require a redesign that respects the habitat and scenic resources of this truly amazing park.

Communication from Public

Name: Mario Pizarro

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:36 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: The LA Zoo's Revised Vision will be detrimental to Griffith Parks ecosystem. This area should be protected and cared for as it contains many rare and sensitive wildlife and plants. We should put our energy in protecting our local flora and fauna. This project will do the opposite.

Communication from Public

Name: Nick McNaughton

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 10:31 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am opposed to conversion of any of Griffith Park's open land for expansion of the LA Zoo. I am not opposed to expanding the Zoo, but not at the expense of our urban wilderness. One possible option, though I'm sure it would be more expensive is reduce the square footage of the zoo's vast parking lot and replacing it with multi-level above or below ground facilities. Sincerely, Nick McNaughton

Communication from Public

Name: Nora Optional

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 10:38 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through a significant geological feature is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. Despite the Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs.

Communication from Public

Name: Kristin Reeder

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 11:28 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I'm commenting on the expansion of the L.A. zoo into Griffith Park. As one of our few larger parks here in the city it's not only a vital space for our community, more importantly for the abundance of wildlife here that is continually being threatened by development. We continue to build in this city and we are forcing animals to come in closer contact with us and our yards which puts them at greater risk. As an L.A. native whose grandfather - Ludlow Flower helped found the L.A. zoo with the mayor; I still do not agree with this expansion. I believe the zoo can find ways to update their facilities without affecting our fragile ecosystem. Please please consider negotiating the plans to benefit the protection of our native species while also ensuring the zoo stays a space for education and conservation. This construction would create irreversible damage to Griffith Park.

Communication from Public

Name: Shana Rapoport
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 11:32 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: This comment pertains to the potential modification and footprint expansion of the L.A. Zoo. I ask that any planning that proceeds:
1. Result in no loss of native habitat, and 2. Ensures new structures not alter the views of the park to passers by. The current plan is heavily focused on irreparably modifying the physical and biological integrity of our park. The impacts of such alterations are deeply saddening for those of us who consider the park part of our home. There is abundant opportunity to expand the zoo's offerings while honoring the intention of Griffith J. Griffith in entrusting this park to Los Angeles. The zoo is situated in the midst of native flora and fauna yielding much opportunity to introduce visitors to native Southern California habitat. One such possibility is the consideration of offering educational walks in the park. Such activities would provide a great service to the community. In addition, I request that those living in the surrounding community receive specific announcements and updates regarding this proposal in the future. I have lived across the street from the park for more than a decade. I'm grateful to have learned about these proposals from community organizations. I am disappointed that the city has not felt the need to notify me regarding the proposal. I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on this item.

Communication from Public

Name: Hayley

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 11:37 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am asking the council to consider carefully any plan for invasive land use change such as that proposed for the Griffith Park vision plan. If the City aims to be sustainable - yes, land use changes and smart landscape development is appropriate and essential! At the same time, the baseline of sustainability is to not consume or degrade resources unless there is a net gain. Disruption of soils and habitat is just another day in society here but these systems lose something when they are destroyed - we typically aren't good about building back what was damaged and fall short of replicating what once was. I would ask anyone to consider how existing spaces and resources can be improved and repurposed before degrading another "blank" canvas.

Communication from Public

Name: Aida
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 11:39 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am incredibly disappointed in this “Final EIR.” It ignores all of the community input, like the draft EIR did. Instead, it attempts to only do damage control by throwing out some purported ideas that are not guaranteed to have the Council adopt it. The public has overwhelmingly been against this expansion as it will result in the destruction of habitat for flora and fauna in the park, as well, the destruction will aggressively disturb the flora and fauna in the park, and the outcome will further the destruction by inviting at least a doubling of the current vehicle traffic in the park. When I spoke to CD4 about this expansion, their response was that the Zoo isn’t making money. Well it is a department of the city, the city is not a for-profit institution! If the Zoo wants to make money, then it should find private land to lease and not waste our tax dollars. Are we going to expect libraries to turn a profit next? The Zoo is also campaigning on misinformation. Their goals are not to increase space for the animals, they are planning on adding animals to the enclosures. Their goal is not to preserve biodiversity, as the EIR itself says that the expansion will lead to the extinction of local flora and fauna—animals and plants in the park will go extinct because of the damaging construction. All of this is only a plan to create a Disneyland in Los Angeles at the expense of animals for the Olympics. It is really depressing as this is during a time when we are already losing so much biodiversity, and seeing the real effects of climate change. We don’t need to see a Zoo expansion. We need to see the Zoo more effectively use the land it has. Use the parking lot, it is very large, it doesn’t need to demolish sensitive habitats. I oppose the Zoo expansion. Council stop repeating your mistakes and approving plans in the face of public outcry.

Communication from Public

Name: Francis Weiss Rabkin

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 05:28 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: The LA Zoo should not be permitted to expand it's footprint. The expansion would destroy native habitat including 227 City Protected Trees, including native oaks and walnuts and diminish the Griffith Park experience of a natural environment. Ethically, zoos should not exist and they have gone out of fashion. Tax payers should not be saddled with \$650 million for a tourist attraction that will only continue to wane in value. But most important in my opinion is the environmental impact. I urge you to support Alternative 1, the "Environmentally Superior Alternative."

Communication from Public

Name: Mark Skoner

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 05:45 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Please reconsider the destructive impacts to Griffith Park proposed in LA Zoo's Revised Vision Plan, Alt 1.5. - Excavation of a 60 foot deep condor canyon through a significant geological feature is expensive, destructive, and will radically change the ecology and aesthetics of Griffith Park. I love the park because of its natural beauty. It doesn't need more terraforming on top of existing roads and trails. Enough is enough! - Proposed California Visitor Center destroys the natural topology of a beautiful ridgeline. It breaks my heart to imagine seeing that eyesore instead of the natural landscape. Again, where Griffith Park is concerned, the smaller the built-by-humans footprint, the better. Look around LA: we need NATURE, not more excavation and construction. We need a place like Griffith Park, without adding more visitor centers and other such human-made clutter...for our sanity!! - The zoo insists the 16 acres proposed for development are already disturbed and therefore fair game for their designs. NO!! Compared to what the zoo wants to build, that area is relatively natural in appearance and ecology. It's an intact chaparral landscape that contains 26 City-protected trees and shrubs, and other sensitive plants and wildlife. It should not be developed!! In summary, I've learned more about plants and animals, and the concept of nature, by walking through Griffith Park than I've learned from any zoo, visitor center, or structured "attraction." People, especially kids, need to know that nature can thrive if we give it space and respect, and watch our step as we walk among it. Everything doesn't have to be tailored to human entertainment. Take a walk in Griffith Park, don't destroy it by trying to change what nature gave us. Once we screw it up, all we'll have is regrets.

Communication from Public

Name: Erica Silverman
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 05:48 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: If Los Angeles destroys more wildlife habitat to enact the Zoo's so-called Vision Plan, shame on us. At this moment in history, when we face an extinction crisis, biodiversity loss and a climate emergency, every city needs to be 100% dedicated to preserving biodiversity, fighting climate change and stopping the extinction crises. The zoo does such important work saving animal species around the world. That does not make it acceptable to destroy the native habitat that supports our own endangered plant and animal species. It is inexcusable. We are setting an example around the world with our wildlife crossing. How ironic to be doing something so monumental to save wildlife in one part of the city while adding unnecessary structures that will endanger their habitat elsewhere. I urge you to reconsider this ill-advised plan.

Communication from Public

Name: Jamie Lawrence
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 05:49 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I don't support this destructive plan. It would cause harm to local plants and wildlife and is unnecessary. Griffith Park is beautiful as it is. I've been enjoying it as a sanctuary in the 13 years I've lived here, and even longer as an LA native. The Zoo has kept Billy the elephant in captivity, suffering, for decades, despite pleas from the community and plans to release him to a rescue sanctuary. I don't believe they are reliable, trustworthy, or have the best interest of Angelinos or animals (wild or otherwise) in mind as a result. Please do not support this project. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Jennifer Corrigan
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 06:12 PM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: How is destroying a natural area with man made buildings teaching the public about nature???

Communication from Public

Name: Alessandra Pasquino

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 06:31 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: As a citizen of Los Angeles and a lover of the wild nature that inhabits our city, I am in absolute disagreement with the proposed expansion of the LA Zoo. I see this expansion as financially motivated and see no educational or benefit to the expansion of the zoo into some sort of park. The Zoo should educate the general public to the appreciation, respect and care of wild nature and wild lands and instigate and divulge the concept that animals belong to the landscape they inhabit and not confined to limited spaces for the enjoyment and profit of humans. Therefore I object to the proposed expansion of the LA Zoo and the take over and commodifying of surrounding wild lands.

Communication from Public

Name: Jessica Brown-Clark

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 06:49 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am against alternative 1.5. It drastically alters the Griffith Park and will destroy nature space that is critical for wildlife. It doesn't make sense to destroy natural habitats for wild creatures in order to expand artificial habits for captive animals. I live in Los Feliz, and I am against zoo expansion plans that require clearing habitat.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 07:02 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I truly do not agree with decimating more of that ridge line and area of Griffith Park, especially for an institution which will be shrinking at size in the coming decades, rather than expanding, as all public zoos are doing now, and their effort to grapple with their current use and culture. There are other ways of engaging our community. They don't interrupt one of our most famous skylines as seen from two different freeways and thousands of residents.

Communication from Public

Name: Emil Konishi

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 07:15 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to oppose the LA Zoo Alternative 1.5 Expansion plan. The alternative plan introduced includes the demolition and development of 13+ acres within the undeveloped native habitat. I do support the preservation and outreach of the L.A. Zoo. But destroying the habitat of native wild animals and protected plant life in order to build a visitor center for the Zoo is contradictory to this mission. Here are some key notes of the permanent damage that this would cause to the landscape: - destruction of the 26 varieties of protected trees and shrubs that inhabit the proposed space - irreversible damage to the landscape of the iconic and beloved Griffith canyon - destruction of undeveloped habitat for animals - removal of much needed shared outdoor recreation spaces - extremely costly, both to develop and to permanently maintain - unnecessary to furthering the zoo's proposed mission - increased traffic in the area which would require further disruption and development to support There is no offsetting this amount of disturbance of wildlife. The previous move has already left unused cages and development as a scar on the landscape. The park and the proposed area is much loved by locals looking to get away from urban life. I urge that this plan be heavily reconsidered in a way that is respectful to the native life that inhabits it.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 07:17 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Please do not allow the LA Zoo to build on more land that belongs to Griffith Park's natural habitat. We need to protect local animal and plant species, including the 16 acres of native habitat that hold City protected plants and native wildlife. Expanding the zoo is not in the best interests of the longevity or protection of Griffith Park, which is the largest municipal park with urban wilderness in the United States. Allowing the LA Zoo to expand may be financially beneficial for their business, but they will be contradicting their very own mission statement to "nurture wildlife" by removing natural habitat for local wildlife.

Communication from Public

Name: Brenda Rodriguez
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 07:54 PM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: I oppose the proposed expansion by the LA Zoo as it would negatively impact native plants and animal species. Thank you

Communication from Public

Name: Tia Williams

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 08:06 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: To City Council and the LA Zoo The expansion of the LA Zoo is one of the worst plans to be brought up. As it is wild animals are being pushed out of their habitats at a rapid rate and they are being seen more often in people's backyards and that is because these idiot, greedy developers keep building in these wild animals homes and you gage these selfish idiots who keep buying these homes. So stop destroying these animals habitats. We residents DONT WANT THE ZOO TO EXPAND. 13 acres is alot of land that would be taken away from deer, coyotes, rabbits and other animals that call this home and rely on the food sources that are in this area. STAY OUT OF THAT LAND , THAT DEVELOPMENT WOULD DESTROY THE CHARM AND BEAUTIFUL SCENERY OF THE HILLS, THE VIEWS WILL BE GONE WHERE YOU WOULD BE LOOKING AT STRUCTURES. WE DONT WANT THAT PERIOD. LEAVE THAT AREA ALONE, THATS THESE ANIMALS HOME. WHAT A BUNCH OF GREEDY SELFISH HUMANS. STOP THESE PLANS. Thank you Tia Williams .

Communication from Public

Name: Madeline Skith

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 08:56 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: To City Councilmembers, More habitat loss should not even be brought up, there should not even be a discussion on this, this expansion will push out more animals onto roads and freeways and animals are going to get killed. Stop killing animals by taking away their habitats. Move the zoo and stop playing with the livelihood of these wild animals, CA as it is looks like a concrete structure, the hills are disappear and housing developments and commercial development keep moving into these areas that are home to hundreds of animals. People really suck, once the animals are gone , there goes everything else right behind them. You people on the city council are really ruthless, disturbed people you keep destroying the lives of people and you go after the animals too Give these animals a break and stop allowing more animal habitat to be destroyed because you want the money. We the taxpayers own everything it should be up to us not a few people who are so called city officials. THIS PLAN IS A NO VOTE. When an ecosystem has been dramatically changed by human development and activities like commercial development, or water diversion, that disrupts the food sources, water, shelter, and places to raise their young that wildlife need to survive. Every day there are fewer places left that wildlife can call home. NO VOTE ON THIS GREEDY PLAN, stop taking away their homes.
Mrs. Madeline Smith

Communication from Public

Name: Elizabeth Finder

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:02 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I'm writing in opposition to LA Zoo's Revised Vision Plan, Alt. 1.5. To develop Griffith Park (ie: 60 foot excavation, a visitor center atop a ridgeline, etc) will irreparably damage a truly unique LA gem. We need these wild spaces; Griffith is a refuge for native species - human and animal alike. Please don't approve chipping it away.

Communication from Public

Name: Rebecca P Hackett-Levy

Date Submitted: 06/26/2023 08:14 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: The proposed visitors center destroys native habitat and takes more of this park of the people away. LA has been doing a great job making planting a priority, isn't this move counter intuitive? as temps get higher we need less asphalt and more air cleaning shade giving trees/bushes. Not less. The parking alone will add another heat creating scar. Please consider another site (maybe one that is already developed?) On a side note- this will increase traffic on a road that is supposed to be safe for waking and biking and already is very congested and scary at times.

Communication from Public

Name: Shoshana

Date Submitted: 06/26/2023 10:35 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I vehemently oppose this. If the LA Zoo actually cares about animals, they should reconsider this expansion which would be detrimental to local Lo Angeles wildlife.

Communication from Public

Name: Denys Hemen

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 08:55 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Developing space that is home to thousands of wild animals for humans to look at a few caged animals during this time of mass extinction is just the sort of idea that got us where we are. Cutting down ancient oak groves that suck carbon dioxide out of our air in a time of climate change is not what California stands for. The zoo has more than enough space to expand on the property they already own. This is not the kind of development we need right now. I hope this proposal fails. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Gerry Hans
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 08:58 AM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: I do not support excavation and destruction of California Planning Area native habitat, "disturbed" or not. The following photos were taken in Griffith Park, a sampling that represents some of the Rare, Endangered and/or Sensitive-status species of flora and fauna which could be adversely affected by implementing Alternative 1.5.

Berberis nevinii
Nevin's barberry
Present in California Planning Area



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

California Rare Plant Rank: [1B.1](#) (*rare, threatened, or endangered in CA and elsewhere*).
State of California status: Endangered. Federal status: Endangered.

Sambucus mexicana
Elderberry
Present in California Planning Area



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

City of Los Angeles Protected Tree/Shrub Ordinance

Quercus agrifolia
Coast live oak
Present in California Planning Area



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

City of Los Angeles Protected Tree/Shrub Ordinance

Heteromeles arbutifolia
Toyon
Present in California Planning Area



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

City of Los Angeles Protected Tree/Shrub Ordinance

Calochortus plummerae
Plummer's mariposa lily
Likely Present in California Planning Area
(I dispute it being listed as Low Probability in EIR)



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

California Rare Plant Rank: 4.2

Calochortus clavatus var. clavatus
Club haired mariposa
Potentially Present in California Planning Area



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

California Rare Plant Rank: 4.3

Phrynosoma blainvillii
Blainesville horned lizard
Potentially Present in California Area
(Not Mentioned in EIR 3.3 Biological)



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

SSC

Species of Special Concern

Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri
San Diegan Tiger Whiptail
Likely Present in California Planning Area
(Not Mentioned in EIR 3.3 Biological)



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

SSC

Species of Special Concern

Anniella stebbinsi
Southern California legless lizard
(Moderate Likely Present in EIR 3.3 Biological)



Photo Gerry Hans, Griffith Park

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

SSC

Species of Special Concern

Communication from Public

Name: Ingrid Popper

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:26 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I support the Zoo Vision Plan 1.50 The Zoo is a crucial part of the education of the North Hollywood Biological Sciences Zoo Magnet. Many of the alumni go on to work with animals and in environmental science. We need to be able to demonstrate our city's ability to conform to ADA standards, power our own facilities using solar energy, maintaining native plant habitats, and engaging in the conservation of the California Condor population. Thank you!

Communication from Public

Name: Alvaro Gomez

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:31 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Although I support the zoo's mission and need to adapt to changing economic realities, placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. I also encourage the council to reconsider the addition of the 2,000-car garage because of the impacts it will have on the character of the park and the look and feel from Zoo Drive and adjacent trails. I support Multi-modal Transportation Alternative 2 (The Multi-modal Transportation Alternative) which would reduce employee Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by 15 percent and visitor VMT by 2040. This alternative would retain all improvements proposed under the Project with the exception of the onsite parking structure, which would be reduced in size, bulk, and scale in response to increased multi-modal transportation options for Zoo visitors and employees and would commensurately reduce parking demand. I would also respectfully request that the Council consider tying any improvements to the Zoo with offsite improvements throughout the park such as creating a complete bicycle and pedestrian network and better integrating the Lake Hollywood Reservoir. Additionally, there are many trails, signage, and other pieces of public infrastructure within the park that have fallen into disrepair and require attention. The vision of a world-class zoo can only go so far if the surrounding park is not treated like the world-class institution that it should be.

Communication from Public

Name: LG

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:36 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Honorable Councilmembers - SUPPORT THE LA ZOO! Most public comments are misleading and inaccurate as it relates to Alt. 1.5. The Zoo IS NOT expanding into Griffith Park! Approve the Revised EIR for the benefit of the Animals in the Zoo care and all the children who come through it's gate. Improvements and upgrades are desperately needed and they do not equate to an amusement park. The LA Zoo is a leader in Conservation and Education - let the Zoo lead!

Communication from Public

Name: Miguel Ordenana
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:42 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to oppose the LA Zoo Vision plan as described in FEIR 1.5. I am a wildlife biologist with over a decade of experience studying wildlife in Griffith Park and Southern California. I am also a member of the zoo and owe the zoo a lot for their role in cultivating my passion for wildlife conservation as a youth, especially their student volunteer program and in-situ and ex-situ conservation work on pronghorns, condors, yellow legged frogs. This is why it is especially hard to be speaking out against this institution. However, I would feel irresponsible if I did not speak up against the absolutely destructive project that is proposed. I am also speaking up as an environmental professional of color who has strong ties to the environmental justice community and would like to dismantle the misleading narrative that is being used by zoo vision proponents who claim that the people opposed to the zoo vision are predominantly, white, and privileged individuals looking to uphold outdated and traditional conservation models. I find it offensive to learn that zoo vision plan proponents have weaponized this idea to accomplish their goals and characterize their opposition as a monolith. Further, the goal of myself and many others are not to totally eliminate any plans for construction but to scale it back and avoid key areas that are unnecessary, according to even zoo staff, and would have a devastating impact to the land. As a biologist, I am especially knowledgeable about Griffith Park wildlife and recognize holes in the FEIR reports claims after tracking bobcats in Griffith Park, conducting three camera trap studies in the park, and monitoring bats in the LA Zoo and other parts of the Griffith Park ecosystem, including a project within the zoo supported by LA Zoo Conservation grants. Additionally, I have conducted studies on the edge of the park, illuminating the park's value to neighboring ecosystems such as the LA River. Therefore, I know for a fact that their claims that bats have adapted to the disturbance they created has no basis, like many of their biological assessments. In fact, After P-22, I detected a Western mastiff bat, a CA species of special concern that was thought to be extirpated for 10 years before it was detected on zoo property. Since then, I have detected it in other parts of the Griffith Park ecosystem as recent as last year. These discoveries should inspire people to place more value in urban ecosystems whether the ecosystems are disturbed or not

instead of writing them off as "better-off developed." They should be seen as the next frontier for biodiversity exploration. Discoveries in urban areas have a greater impact on making nature and science accessible to communities underrepresented in the sciences and conservation movement because the species are found in unexpected yet familiar spaces, especially if conducted in inclusive ways such as through community science. As someone who was inspired by urban wildlife to pursue my career, I beg the zoo to not give up on this opportunity to conserve and restore this habitat in partnership with the community while moving at the speed of trust. Moving or planting extra plants after the habitat is destroyed is not the same as restoration and that needs to be made clear, since that can be very misleading. Once soil disturbance occurs, especially at the scale you propose, native seedbanks and mycorrhizae fungi (critical to soil health) are lost. The impact of grading can also stimulate non native seed banks and exacerbate nonnative plant invasions. As a venue that hosted a P-22 memorial, I find the destruction of any undeveloped part of his former territory as hypocritical to honoring his legacy. Even if the area under threat of development is not pristine does not mean we should give up on it. Instead we should see that as an opportunity to inspire people to invest in enhancing habitat and ecosystem function/health. As an alternative solution to altering the topography of Condor Canyon or excavating a hole through it, the habitat could be a one of a kind living laboratory used for experiential learning in habitat restoration and protection. It could be used for restoration workshops, professional development opportunities, paid internships for aspiring environmental professionals underrepresented in the environmental field, and as a way to activate community science research opportunities in a way that makes urban nature and science more accessible. It is clear that the zoo staff want and deserve enhancements to address their concerns of employee safety, animal welfare, and visitor experience. However, their own staff, who I will leave anonymous, acknowledge that these much needed improvements can be easily accomplished without the construction of a visitor center or the destruction of 13+ acres of habitat. I oppose the construction of the California Visitor Center and development of Condor Canyon. (Full comment attached)

I am writing to oppose the LA Zoo Vision plan as described in FEIR 1.5 in its current state. I am a wildlife biologist with over a decade of experience studying wildlife in Griffith Park and Southern California. I am also a member of the zoo and owe the zoo a lot for their role in cultivating my passion for wildlife conservation as a youth, especially their student volunteer program and in-situ and ex-situ conservation work on pronghorns, condors, yellow legged frogs. This is why it is especially hard to be speaking out against this institution. However, I would feel irresponsible if I did not speak up against the absolutely destructive project that is being proposed. I am also speaking up as an environmental professional of color who has strong ties to the environmental justice community and would like to dismantle the misleading narrative that is being used by zoo vision proponents who claim that the people opposed to the zoo vision are predominantly, white, and privileged individuals looking to uphold outdated and traditional conservation models. I find it offensive to learn that zoo vision plan proponents have weaponized and appropriated this concept from community leaders deeply involved in equitable conservation approaches and environmental justice to support their argument and characterize their opposition as a monolith. Further, the goal of myself and many others are not to totally eliminate any plans for construction but to scale it back and avoid key areas that are unnecessary, according to even zoo staff, and would have a devastating impact to the land.

As a biologist, I am especially knowledgeable about Griffith Park wildlife and recognize holes in the FEIR reports claims after tracking bobcats in Griffith Park, conducting three camera trap studies in the park, and monitoring bats in the LA Zoo and other parts of the Griffith Park ecosystem, including a project within the zoo supported by LA Zoo Conservation grants. Additionally, I have conducted studies on the edge of the park, illuminating the park's value to neighboring ecosystems such as the LA River. Therefore, I know for a fact that their claims that bats have adapted to the disturbance they created has no basis, like many of their biological assessments. In fact, I detected a Western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis*), a species of special concern in the state of California that the western bat working group thought was extirpated for 10 years before it was detected on zoo property. Since then, I have detected it in other parts of the Griffith Park ecosystem as recent as last year. My discovery of this bat and P-22 should inspire people to place more value in urban ecosystems whether the ecosystems are disturbed or not instead of writing them off as "better-off developed." They should be seen as the next frontier for biodiversity exploration. Biodiversity discoveries in urban parks have a greater impact on making nature and science accessible to communities underrepresented in the sciences and conservation movement because the species are found in unexpected yet familiar spaces, especially if conducted in inclusive ways such as through community science. As someone who was inspired by urban wildlife to pursue my career, I beg the zoo to not give up on this opportunity to conserve and restore this habitat in partnership with the community while moving at the speed of trust. Moving or planting extra plants after the habitat is destroyed is not the same as restoration and that needs to be made clear, since that can be very misleading. Once soil disturbance occurs, especially at the scale you propose, native seedbanks and mycorrhizae fungi (critical to soil health) are lost. The

impact of grading can also stimulate nonnative seed banks and exacerbate nonnative plant invasions.

My collaborations that began in 2011 and ranged from research to public program collaborations have allowed me to get to know zoo staff that still work there and who have moved on. Although I am not representing my employer (Natural History Museum of LA County), my museum has many past employees from the zoo and I have colleagues from the museum that now work at the zoo, which gives me a good sense of the zoo staff experience. It is clear that the zoo staff want and deserve enhancements to address their concerns of employee safety, animal welfare, and visitor experience. However, their own staff, who I will leave anonymous, acknowledge that these much needed improvements can be easily accomplished without the construction of a visitor center on a ridgeline or the destruction of 13+ acres of habitat. Specifically, I am opposed to the following plans:

- Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through a significant geological feature is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically.
- Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated.
 - Despite the Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife.
 - It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs.

Further, I find it irresponsible for how selective they have been about outreach and special tours that have been very controlled in a way that favors a false narrative that places the zoo in a light that is transparent and responsive to outside perspectives. The city of LA even went through the trouble of organizing local biodiversity experts to build a responsible future for LA biodiversity and this resource and valuable knowledge base was not utilized. Instead city staff and biologists with minimal expertise with local flora and fauna or personal connection to the land were in charge and mischaracterized the current ecosystem and what will be lost. Their outreach also poorly incorporated the perspectives of environmental advocacy or justice groups along with other communities historically excluded from conservation projects and discussions. The lack of support from scientific and environmental experts with local knowledge should raise a big red flag regarding the inadequate outreach and assessment of the impact this has to wildlife and LA communities. Although I am grateful that they scaled back their original vision plan, they have been extremely resistant to accepting and being responsive to any additional feedback since the current plan was revealed. Instead any outreach or conversations have been filled with gas lighting instead of productive two way conversations. In fact organizations that are overwhelmingly opposed to the zoo's plans and harmed by the lack of inclusivity displayed throughout this process, have spoken out against this plan, ranging from members of outdoor equity organizations, local tribes, and biologists with decades of local experience. The few supporters seem to

have a strong affiliation with the zoo or have a loose grasp on the specifics of the damage and big picture implications of this plan to the ecosystem.

Even if the area under threat of development is not pristine does not mean we should give up on it. Instead we should see that as an opportunity to inspire people to invest in enhancing habitat and ecosystem function/health. As an alternative solution to altering the topography of Condor Canyon or excavating a hole through it, the habitat could be a one of a kind living laboratory used for experiential learning in habitat restoration and protection. It could be used for restoration workshops, professional development opportunities, paid internships for aspiring environmental professionals underrepresented in the environmental field, and as a way to activate community science research opportunities in a way that makes urban nature and science more accessible.

As the biologist who discovered P-22 and as someone who has remained committed to honoring the legacy he has left behind, I feel obligated to describe how the zoo's destructive plans will be an insult to his legacy, the legacy of other Griffith Park wildlife that have fallen victim to the impacts of habitat destruction, and the efforts of environmental leaders to prevent habitat destruction in support of wildlife relatives and urban residents with minimal access to open spaces throughout LA. I applaud the zoo for not retaliating against him when he killed one of their koalas and when they treated P-22 when we was struck by a car in December 2022. However, the development of the ridgeline and destruction of any undeveloped habitat is hypocritical to honoring the legacy of P-22. Following P-22's death, the zoo used their space as a memorial for P-22 since all of the Griffith Park ecosystem was his territory and is the territory of countless other species. Was this a performative act by the city and the zoo? I ask the same question as city leaders are planning for a Griffith Park memorial for P-22. What hypocritical message is the zoo and city officials sending when urban Los Angeles County has already dealt with severe habitat loss and fragmentation over the years? Like other metropolitan areas, Los Angeles struggles to provide its residents adequate access to nature and access for wildlife to sufficient habitat and connectivity. Every bit of habitat on private property or public land counts. The Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing is reconnecting bisected habitat not too far away to compensate for our missteps and is a huge step forward for habitat connectivity and urban wildlife conservation, while this would take us two steps back as a conservation community.

I hope that the zoo can display some humility and honor the wishes of the majority of community members by centering wildlife, community voices, and the interests of the Griffith Park ecosystem. This message is a follow up to the message I submitted during the previous public comment session, which I have included below for your reference and convenience:

I am a former consulting biologist of the LA Zoo, LA Zoo Conservation Grant recipient, zoo member, LA Zoo Student Volunteer Program alum, current environmental educator, urban wildlife biologist, and environmental justice advocate. As a minority within this field, the zoo was critical to making a career in the wildlife conservation field seem

accessible to me. I have a great deal of respect for zoos and am proud to support my daughter and sons love for zoos. AZA accredited zoos have an important role via captive breeding and supporting the conservation of imperiled species in the wild. Although the revised version of the Zoo Vision Plan (1.5) is significantly better and has moved the zoo a step forward towards supporting the Griffith Park ecosystem, the major steps back via the new California section and visitors center would be disastrous and totally unnecessary. As a renowned conservation leader with their work on pronghorns, condors, and yellow-legged frogs, the destruction of 16 acres of hillside would be in total contradiction of those values.

The drastic improvement is a reflection of the responsiveness to most of the critical feedback. However, the fact that there remain significant ecological concerns in even the improved version speaks to a failure to communicate and receive input from local experts in the fields of biodiversity research and outdoor equity. This is not only damaging to future conservation efforts, that all require collaborations with external stakeholders to be ethical and effective, but is damaging to the current ecosystem health and restoration potential of Condor Canyon. I am in full support of the zoo redeveloping the already built sections of the zoo because densifying within already developed habitat is in line with the most up to date overarching directions for future development needs globally. The fact that sections of Condor Canyon are already disturbed with storage areas, a gravel road, and nonnative plants is still restorable. Once you begin to remove soil and change the topography, any resulting planting are mitigation and not restoration. The main difference is that a mitigated habitat will not have the same ecosystem value as a restored ecosystem. Further, although nonnative plants do not have the same value as native plant ecosystems, they do still have important roles for certain native species that have adapted to them. Some examples include the reliance of western yellow bats (*Dasypterus xanthinus*) specialize on palm trees for roosting habitat, including nonnative palms. Raptors such as Great horned owls have adapted to eucalyptus trees and monarchs have adapted to other nonnative trees. I share this not to advocate for nonnative habitat but to acknowledge that this limited habitat value even needs to be considered when weighing the pros and the cons of changing the landscape in an even more dramatic way. As a carnivore expert, ridgelines are incredibly valuable for habitat connectivity and wildlife movement, especially in a place like Griffith Park. The vision also did not touch on the significant impacts to soil ecosystems. Once soil disturbance occurs, especially at the scale you propose, native seedbanks and mycorrhizae fungi (critical to soil health) are lost. The impact of grading can also stimulate nonnative seed banks and exacerbate nonnative plant invasions.

The future impacts of light pollution have also been understated. As someone who studied bats on zoo grounds, I know there is no research to confirm that the zoo population is somehow specially adapted to noise and light pollution. The FEIR actually claims, "bats currently roost in bat boxes in one of the most frequented areas of the Zoo and therefore, are acclimated to light, noise, and human activity in this area." The minimal surveying that I did documented only 3 urban bat species that are known to somewhat adapt to disturbance. In reality, certain species are adaptable to this but the

majority of the species I documented at the zoo are bats species sensitive and easily displaced by noise and light pollution. This is also false because there is no evidence of any bats occupying bat boxes and was merely an attempted mitigation effort that failed like many others do.

In conclusion, I agree that the staff and animals deserve upgrades to areas that already being used for animal care. The temporary inconveniences and disturbance from that work is worth the cost. However, once you begin developing condor canyon that is unnecessary and short sighted. At that point, it is a want vs. need situation, which is an inexcusable reason to develop more within a park under constant development pressure. Although 16 acres does not seem like that much, it is enormous within the ecological and social context of Los Angeles' availability of habitat and open space. One of my daughter's most memorable moments was when one of the talented zoo educators had a spotting scope, a typical field research tool, set up in the zoo along with fun condor related activities. He allowed my daughter to view the condors via the scope even though she had already gotten a closer peek via the condor trail while on a hike. The experience was very authentic and replacing that with a closer look at a condor knowing the devastatingly unnecessary habitat destruction it caused would be extremely sad and shameful.

As a wildlife conservation biologist that wants the best for the zoo and the diverse people it wants to serve better, I request that the zoo reconsider its plan and not only consult but internalize the recommendations of local knowledge instead of making more plans in isolation and decisions that are prescriptive rather than collaborative. Do not set this damaging precedent by developing native and restorable habitat while insulting the intelligence of not just local experts, but all Angelenos, by telling them that it is in the best interest for wildlife conservation and nature access. Instead let's invest in environmental education and professional development opportunities that will build relationships, enhance habitat, support conservation with a farther reach, and center outdoor equity.

Communication from Public

Name: Hope Creature

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:58 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I agree with the organization CLAW (Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife), that this zoo expansion project should be rejected due to the harmful impacts it will have on the surrounding ecosystem. The irony is hopefully not lost on those in charge of making this decision, I believe CLAW stated it best: "The proposed project purports to add educational value to the public about nature, while ironically destroying the surrounding natural area and replacing it with artificial structures. The Zoo could achieve much stronger educational impacts by conserving the natural land and exposing the public to the importance and beauty of our local existing wildlands." - CLAW I am against this expansion and I hope the right decision will be made for all our fellow creature's we share this planet with. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Roberto Mazariegos

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 03:01 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I have lived in Hollywood for 28 years. Griffith park is my family's Yellowstone park. Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through a significant geological feature is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. Despite the Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs. The city should be planing ways to keep our state and city greener and not tearing the few green parks and landmarks that make our environment clean. Stop this development and plan for a better life and not a better profit!!

Communication from Public

Name: Leslie Monsour
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 03:06 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Council Members, I am a third generation Los Angeles resident who opposes the development project proposed by the Los Angeles Zoo, which encroaches on the fragile ecosystems of Griffith Park and the Santa Monica Mountains. Let us share our natural environment with our public and our schools. Instead of forcing our schoolchildren into more visitor centers and institutional, artificial structures. Let our children, our public, and our visitors experience a Los Angeles that understands its environment, by cherishing, preserving, respecting, teaching, and sharing our unique natural environment in a way that doesn't contribute to the destruction and loss of it. Let the public see how nature enhances our city with vitality, clean air, and how it enriches its people with irreplaceable ecological awareness. Please do not allow these construction projects to take place. Nature, itself, along with knowledgeable biologists, botanists, and instructors can serve as beacons of inspiration in a metropolis awash in concrete and commercialism. Give our children a deep and memorable experience they will value forever by allowing them to know the earth and their connection to it, rather than continue to destroy it forever through development projects such as the one proposed by the L.A. Zoo. Let the money be put to better use and serve a cause that preserves the jewel of nature we have been given, rather than create more waste and degradation. Our power grids and water resources are already stretched beyond their limits. Our city is overheated with pavement. Please, let's finally show respect for our own natural habitats and those of our fellow creatures. Let us be a model for the world's preservation, instead of setting an example for how to further destroy the environment. Send this proposal back to the drawing board.
Sincerely, Leslie Monsour

Communication from Public

Name: Jeanne McConnell

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 03:22 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Angelenos for Trees opposes the current proposed expansion and improvement of the Zoo as it relates to the proposed plan to cut into a ridge of natural habitat in the park thereby destroying 13 plus acres of natural woodlands. In today's environment Zoos have expanded their roles and strongly emphasis scientific research and species conservation. It is ironic with that in mind, that our City is ignoring the impact of removing California Black Walnut- Live Oak Woodlands (considered under threat by California Department of Fish and Wildlife in Southern California) and utilizing lighting that has been scientifically proven to disrupt the habitat. We encourage the Zoo to set an example by highlighting the threatened California Black Walnut-Live Oak Woodland and all the species these Woodlands support. As Angelenos we are stewards of these remaining fragments of open space and land that is both beautiful and uniquely biodiverse. These 13 acres of Woodlands warrant preservation and species conservation.

Communication from Public

Name: Gia Trasatti

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 03:31 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to object to the proposed expansion plans of the LA Zoo as outlined in the LA Zoos RVP Alternate 1.5 – specifically the addition of California section exhibits of “Condor Canyon” and the California Visitor Center. In addition to devastating 13+ acres of rural native habitat, the proposed Zoo expansion would add expanded noisy and unattractive zoo service areas abutting the quiet border of the Condor Trail canyon, as well as destroying the topographic vistas from Skyline and Condor Trails with the addition of the enormous California Visitor Center on a ridgeline at over 600ft elevation– not to mention nearly 50,000sf of glare-producing solar arrays on the California & Africa Visitor center rooftops. Consider this sensitive area: Start a hike up Condor Trail at Mineral Wells; as you come to the top of the first hill where Condor meets Bypass Trail, you’ll notice the quiet around you. Continue along Condor and you walk into a rural peacefulness found in few of the other park trails, with native flora and fauna all around, few people and the hazy cityscape far-off in view. It is one of the few GP trail hikes easily accessible to Valley side residents where one can briefly, but truly feel removed from the ever-present audible, visual and tactile reminders of city living. - There is no busy freeway immediately visibly prominent and audible to your north, as is the case with much of Skyline Trail. - You’re not in the middle of the landfill heat and smell of the Toyon Canyon asphalt debris paths, dotted with service buildings and maintenance detris; - It is not crowded with Hollywood sign seekers, like much of the Park’s south side. - The trail does not merge with a foot-aching paved service road where bicyclists whiz by your ear. The proposed expansion – in addition to generating inconceivable amounts of construction noise and ugly debris during the process (bedrock blasting has not been ruled out) - would devastate this quiet oasis on the park’s north side and ruin the vistas. Note I am not anti-zoo: my mother was a docent at the LA Zoo for years, and my family was a longtime member of GLAZA. I think zoos play a critically vital role in educating people about the importance of conserving wildlife and native habitats. But it is ironic - and quite disingenuous - that an organization whose stated mission is “Saving Wildlife” and “Creating Connections to Nature” is goal-driven to destroy the natural wildlife of and organic

connection to the Park's rural areas in favor of a grandiose dash to a one-time revenue-generating opportunity of the 2028 Olympics. I understand that undeveloped space is not popular with city councils because it is not monetized – but sometimes doing what's best for your city and its' inhabitants isn't always about revenue... When I travel, if the opportunity and time presents itself, I'll visit a zoo in another city. But I have never, in all my animal-loving life, made a city zoo a destination travel goal. In other words, tourists to LA are either going to go, or they're not – the addition of bigger visitor centers with fine dining, rock climbing walls and other in-zoo recreational amusements are not going to determine the choice to visit. Please give a moment's thought to the everyday residents of your city who depend upon our council to protect what we already have. Thank You.

Communication from Public

Name: Devin Blair
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 03:35 PM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: Please respect the nature that remains in the Griffith Park area.
Enough damage has been done.

Communication from Public

Name: Joline

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 03:39 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I oppose this revision plan. We've only got so much natural nature left in Los Angeles. Please consider the native plants and animals that will be materially impacted. Think of P22 and all who loved him. He left home and made the journey to Griffith park due to the limited habitat options available to animals in our urban environment. The right thing to do is to preserve and protect natural habitats remaining in LA — this plan will further disrupt and permanently damage the ecosystem forever. Thank you!

Communication from Public

Name: Thea Wang

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 03:55 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am against expanding the developed area of the LA zoo into the natural habitat of Griffith Park. I think that work take away wildlife habitat. Damage water recharge and decrease our ability to withstand climate change. All natural habitat and biodiversity loss will do these things. It appears in opposition to what the zoo stands for in terms of wanting to help wildlife and species. It sends a horrible message to patrons of the zoo. Kill our native wildlife and even massively alter the geology and rocks of our community on order to expand the physical buildings of the zoo. If the habitat is so damaged already as is claimed then you should spend the money on true restoration. Or even help the already existing animals without expanding the zoo footprint. In addition when you take your kids to the zoo there is already so much walking around the exhibits are far apart. And now you are expanding further into the park. Keep everything contained and enhance what you already have. The LA zoo focuses on animals living in far away lands but true community connections to wildlife will happen when the zoo values the local wildlife and can demonstrate how it helps them. People in los Angeles are proud of our native species that live here. Tons of people come out for lacnhm events with bats and bioblitzes the public already loves local wildlife. Please don't jeopardize the existence of wildlife to expand the footprint of the zoo. You are sending the wrong message. The message that you don't care about wildlife and that you are actively harming habitat.

Communication from Public

Name: Betina Loudermilk

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 04:00 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I 100% oppose the LA Zoo to expand or do anything outside of the land they currently occupy. It makes no sense to destroy some of the last natural habitat we have within the city limits. Please don't approve any of the changes the zoo wants to make to Griffith Park. It needs to remain open space for our wildlife and native plants.

Communication from Public

Name: JOANNE SHINOZAKI

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 04:10 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Please consider the welfare of the zoo animals above those of tourists. Please also consider the safety of the zoo animals living with an increasingly high wildfire risk. NO BLASTING. Spend the precious tax dollars more wisely. Keep the focus on the welfare of the zoo animals, not on tourist traps. Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through a significant geological feature is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. Despite the Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs.

Communication from Public

Name: Kathryn Kidd

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 04:42 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am totally opposed to the zoo expansion because 23 acres of native woodlands will be destroyed!!! Coast live oaks, Toyons, and California black walnut trees are some of the trees that will be destroyed in this project! They don't care about the environment around the zoo, they just want to create another amusement park to make more money. Once again greed over our wildlife and native plants...some shrubs are even endangered and they want to just rip them out!! Their only motive is profit driven, not what is best for the environment around them. Please do not let this happen to our beautiful California woodlands.

Communication from Public

Name: Tiger Schenkman
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:05 AM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Much of my life has been defined by the LA Zoo. I spent childhood summers at Zoo Camp; and through my teenage years, I both volunteered as a youth docent, and attended the LA-Zoo affiliated Zoo Magnet High School. This is to say that if anyone were to be a proponent of the LA Zoo, it would be me. I have witnessed first hand the ways in which the LA Zoo, and the animals that live there, have suffered as the result of insufficient funding and dwindling popularity, and believe that there are solutions which would enrich both the experiences of the zoo's visitors, and the lives of its dwellers. None of these solutions, however, include the destruction 23 acres of undeveloped habitat. The LA Zoo does not need a new, 18,000 sq. ft. visitor center, or a vineyard, or a rock-climbing wall. It is truly that simple. The LA Zoo, once a steadfast champion of preservation, now views theme park-style attractions as more important than the 120 coast live oaks, 60 toyons, 22 California black walnut trees, stands of federal and state-listed endangered shrubs, and 227 trees listed under L.A. City's Protected Tree Ordinance, which call the 23-acres under threat by the LA Zoo their home. Griffith Park is not a cash cow, it is not Disneyland. It is the last gasp of a world which no longer exists, a biodiversity hotspot which deserves respect and maintenance. The LA Zoo's plan is a brazen (and deeply ironic) show of the institution's greed, and its lack of commitment to environmental protection.

Communication from Public

Name: Heather Fink

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:17 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Last January I endeavored to hike every trail in Griffith Park and fell in love with this incredible place. After moving to LA 5 years ago, nothing connected me more to this city's beauty and history than my exploration in Griffith Park's trails. As I walked, I also felt for the ways human interference has eroded LA's roots and wildlife. As we all learned, P-22 was at the soul of this city largely because LA residents revere the majesty of wildlife, nature, and our parks. Griffith Park is truly unique in its size and location within a major city and must not be compromised by development. Healthy parks and hills are perhaps the greatest aspect of Los Angeles. Do not destroy what makes this city so special. Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through a significant geological feature is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. Despite the Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs.

Communication from Public

Name: Lillie Schachter
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:24 AM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: This destruction of in-use public land for private financial benefit would be harmful to the public, harmful to the fight against climate change, and harmful to the city of Los Angeles. Do not let this be done to us.

Communication from Public

Name: Sam Tayag

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:34 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Further damage and development of green space in LA is the last thing we need. The LA Zoo expansion is a direct contradiction to important green space equity and preservation in our community.

Communication from Public

Name: Sean Lee

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:35 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I would rather walk around trees and dirt and shit for free than have to pay to knock on the windows of animals in captivity If you want a big zoo so bad take one of your super loud helicopters to San Diego

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:45 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: This city is known nation wide for selling out our city and communities to developers for political careers. Developers run this city and it's politicians. It is shameful and corrupt. Do NOT sell out our nature preserves, and famous parks to developers too! Do the right thing! LA Zoo's Revised Vision Plan, Alt. 1.5. OPPOSE...Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through what is a significant geological feature as it is destructive, expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, both aesthetically and ecologically. OPPOSE... Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline that will destroy the natural Park topography and must be reconsidered or eliminated. The Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is already disturbed, is TOTALLY FALSE. This area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs.

Communication from Public

Name: Brenda Contreras

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:58 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly oppose the expansion of the LA Zoo into what is and has been home to an oak-walnut woodland. These trees are our ancestors and are irreplaceable. Mitigation will never be able to sequester the amount of carbon that these mature trees are able to process. The city must consider the health of the ecosystem which directly supports the health of LA's residents. Our health and well being must be prioritized over capitalistic endeavors.

Communication from Public

Name: Sarah basta
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 09:58 AM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: Please do not approve this proposal. The impact on the Wildlife in Griffith Park is too great a cost. We need to think about the big picture here. Keep Griffith wild.

Communication from Public

Name: June Garrett

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 10:02 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: The beauty and unique qualities of LA are being destroyed and desolated. This action plan will further destroy one of the few areas of nature to enjoy. This is such a unique and special park, one that has already had an impact on nature. Nature that should not and can not be further reduced. Animal life is struggling, and the community mourns losses deeply. Why impose further suffering on local residents? Implementing this action plan will negatively impact air quality, animal life, traffic, park usage (as it's intended purpose), and nearly every considerable aspect of enjoyable life in the surrounding area. The equestrian neighborhoods are disappearing, mountain lions are dying, low income kids can't ride HEALTHY ponies anymore—why even have Griffith Park. You might as well blow up the whole hill and open up roads so we can at least escape the remaining hell of LA en masse. This action plan is ridiculous and a shame. Anyone involved in its planning, approval, and/or implementation should be publicly and professionally ostracized for life. Imagine dedicating this much time, effort, and money to destroy life for everyone in the LA vicinity. Shame on you and may you be eaten by mountain lions on your next visit to Griffith Park. Or any park. Anywhere.

Communication from Public

Name: Aleigh Lewis

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 10:22 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: The zoo plan makes no sense. In order to sell people tickets about nature, you ruin nature in the process. Please protect this wild space, so Southern California animals don't have to end up in a zoo themselves. Please rescind this project.

Communication from Public

Name: Leigh Jacoby

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 10:26 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I want to express my strong opposition to the planned LA Zoo expansion which would destroy 16 acres of precious open land in Griffith Park. We cannot afford to lose this chaparral habitat which supports native protected plants and animals. It would be a tragic loss of natural beauty and wildness to excavate Condor Canyon and build a visitors center. Griffith Park is an irreplaceable treasure whose integrity must be preserved. We should not deprive current and future generations of the healing and inspirational experience of unspoiled nature which Griffith Park offers us. We have enough built "entertainment" spaces in our city. We do not need an expanded zoo.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 10:46 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Please leave Griffith Park as it is now. The only change that should occur is expansion!! This is The People's Park and should be left as Wild as possible.

Communication from Public

Name: Alix Soubiran

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 10:48 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Hello, I am a Franklin Hills resident and I am requesting that you make sure that Condor Canyon remains untouched. As City Council, I feel it is your duty to protect Griffith Park, its wildlife and the best interest of the community and not prioritize the special interests of the LA Zoo. Sincerely, Alix Soubiran

Communication from Public

Name: Aimee Benell

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 11:01 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: A California Visitor Center SHOULD NOT devastate our precious and PROTECTED lands. Our Condor Canyon, and all of the native plants and animals NEED our protection. Griffith Park is A TREASURE and should by no means "developed" any more than it has been.

Communication from Public

Name: Belinda Smith Walker

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 11:13 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: As a life-long Angeleno, 20+ year resident of Los Feliz, animal lover, and educator, I urge the City Council to approve the plan to improve the LA Zoo. A great zoo is essential for our city. Most Angelenos don't have the opportunity to encounter a wide range of animals. The expanded LA Zoo will do precisely that, engaging visitors with the diversity of life, the need to preserve it and its natural habitats in the face of climate change.

Communication from Public

Name: Mary Button

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 11:50 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am a resident of the City of Los Angeles, and have lived here for 37 years. I vehemently oppose the L.A. Zoo's Revised Vision Plan (Alternative 1.5). I do not support the expanding of their developed footprint onto the 13.6 acres of valuable native habitat. Instead, it is imperative that we act as responsible stewards and take care of the native habitat of Griffith Park, with its more than 432 native or naturalized park plants. I am deeply concerned about the proposed California Area which would destroy 16 acres of native habitat and remove more than 20 protected trees. Our urban wilderness is our city's most valuable asset and it deserves to be protected. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be eliminated. As we all know, when native habitat is gone, it is lost forever.

Communication from Public

Name: Rene Melara

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:04 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Access to nature is incredibly important to our community's health, wellbeing, and future. As a Los Angeles resident, I am blessed to have access to Griffith Park and the vibrant community of plants, animals, and insects that call it home. Griffith Park is also culturally and historically rich and needs to be protected and preserved so that all are able to appreciate and benefit from this land. I am opposed to plans to disturb, destroy, and forever alter the park and its ecosystem as planned by the LA Zoo. Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through a significant geological feature is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. Despite the Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs.

Communication from Public

Name: Miller Tai

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:06 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly do not support Alternative 1.5, and urge that new proposals be made that do not involve destroying native land that include trees that we're already in desperate need of. This week alone, temperatures are rising to dangerous levels, and destroying more trees will only continue to contribute to the rising heat. The Zoo expansion should not be made at the expense of other resources we desperately need.

Communication from Public

Name: Joan Schipper

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:08 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Regarding LA Zoo's Revised Vision Plan, So much of this plan is wrong-headed. Please reconsider or better yet - drop the whole plan and start over in a logical and economically and environmentally sensible manner. Back in the day, when Los Angeles was growing up and needed roads, the city would only allow excavation by Union Rock Company in Brush Canyon if they preserved the appearance of the mountain. Now here comes the crazy notion to create a new geographic feature by destroying an existing geography and landscape, disrupting the ecosystem there. This area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs. This is throwing a lot of money at a destructive project. The idea of a California Visitor Center is great. But the visitor center as planned will be an eyesore that will demand lots of resources and generate lots of trash. Don't plunk it on the ridgeline that is iconic for residents and visitors alike. Instead, how about making it more accessible and in a less environmentally sensitive location? How about re-purposing existing structures that are accessible via public transportation and maybe in an area with shopping and restaurants that will benefit from more visitors. I'm thinking about Downtown LA - it needs an attraction that will support the businesses there. Or how about Century City? Please preserve the natural landscape - the natural escape for so many city residents and visitors. Please preserve the habitat for our wild residents and amazing natural hillsides. And by the way, the fact that the L.A. Zoo is supporting this project is an embarrassment to their discipline. The zoo should not be about destruction but rather they should be supporting preservation and conservation principles. Protection rather than exploitation.

Communication from Public

Name: Baxley

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:12 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Please do not go ahead with this expansion. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. There are special plants there, and they shouldn't be considered over the zoo. As a Los Feliz local, I see that the wildlife and landscape of this park is more important than the zoo. We are stewards of the space. We GET to enjoy and treat it well. This is a privilege, not a right.

Communication from Public

Name: Diane Sutton

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:23 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I have lived in Los Feliz for 45 yrs. Making the so called “improvements” will be expensive and upset the nature and fauna of the park. Adding an 18,000 sq ft bldg in the area and especially on top of a ridge is NOT progress, but rather ruins and congests our neighborhood, as well as it not being attractive to the area. Is this all about income? We are not the SD Zoo! This plan will disrupt the park's natural plants that are unique to the area. I am opposed to this plan and believe it should not be allowed.

Communication from Public

Name: Mark Powell

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:25 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: As a long time resident of Los Angeles, I would like to express my opposition to the proposed zoo expansion. Griffith Park is one of the few areas that remain in Los Angeles county that is beautiful, accessible, and undeveloped. Urban sprawl has already encroached on the vast majority of such areas. It currently offers spectacular vistas undisturbed by construction and buildings, is the home to a multitude of animals that have already had the boundaries of their living environments greatly reduced, and cultivates many native plants that are already threatened. In addition, ingress and egress to the park is already problematic. Traffic on the 5 is mostly at a standstill and Los Feliz Boulevard has been transformed into a parking lot. The zoo already occupies a large portion of the park and is enjoyed by my residents and tourists alike. An expansion is completely unnecessary. Thank you for your consideration.

Communication from Public

Name: Rene Hersey

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:29 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I live in Toluca Lake, CA native, business owner, home owner, voting public, this proposed excavation & development is my backyard. L.A. is a biodiversity hot spot, we share the land around the L.A. Zoo w multiple species of wildlife who need every square inch left to traverse, nest, hunt and survive on. There will be another P-22 one day too, as mountain lions have habitated Griffith Park for generations, meanwhile BobCats, Raccoons, Opossums, Coyotes, multiple bird species, plants/trees call this land "home"! I'm alarmed that this expansion is proposed to happen at the same time Canyon Hills 221 luxury homes is planned a few miles up the road in Verdugo Hills in an extreme fire danger location. Couple these two projects together and Mountain Lions, yet again, lose essential habitats as they traverse their corridors. Also, just 2 months ago another Mtn Lion, "La Tuna Puma" was identified smack in center of this proposed development. Attracting more cars to this Griffith Park site is a blight on an already congested area, think Barham-Lake Forest Blvds on Fridays at 5 PM. It will benefit your pockets but degrade our wildlife's homes and my home too & will increase human-wildlife conflict. Just 35% of the plan is said to be to enlarge enclosures (as stated in 2021 L.A. Times article). Up until now enlarging exhibits was not front burner. I see the lack of enlarging the spaces as a lack of will over and over thru the decades, a lack of compassion for, let us begin w the Elephant enclosure~Billy has suffered the most, head bobbing, swaying side to side as he is isolated & prevented from walking 25 miles a day as is required for Eles to maintain their health. Billy's freedom was voted down by 1 vote more than 2 decades ago, so there he stands day after day, developing the equivalent of a tubercular condition from standing in a box for 30+ years (as stated by Dr. Joyce Poole, elephant ethologist who met Billy & testified in L.A. Court), do you remember Gita the Ele who died in 2006? They wrapped her infected foot before the mini walks they tried to use to prevent further deterioration to her beleaguered body-she eventually died in her enclosure-
<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-jun-11-me-gita11-story.html>
"Enlarging" Billy's enclosure" now will not give him what P.A.W.S. in Northern California could= space to walk 25+ miles a day and the company of other free roaming Elephants to #coexist with in his last days in a free range wild and protected landscape. Native plants, live oak stands, and the earth surrounding the park and hill sides belong to our wildlife, we are a biodiverse hot spot, with endangered wildlife and plants all over the place. At this rate, if L.A.Zoo destroys ANY of the trees which our owls and raptors and birds and hummers, moths, butterflies nest and perch on, we will lose more essential homes for our wildlife. I live 1.5 miles from this proposed excavation, it will cause a car jam in summer and squeeze out bobcats, raccoons, deer (& who knows when another Mountain Lion will decide to call Griffith Park home again) from grazing and using this habitat as a corridor. Why do the Olympics need an amusement park? Why is this now a priority at the risk of destroying our wildlife's homes forever? Add this proposal to the Canyon Hills 200 large homes plan in the Verdugo Hills just up the road which is smack in the middle of the recently discovered "La Tuna Puma" Mountain Lion's territory and we shall lose 2 wildlife spaces containing critical Mountain Lion access/corridors/year round water source, native plants, trees, habitat.
#nocanyonhills At a time when I thought the city of Los Angeles was prioritizing

wildlife crossings aka the Annenberg Wildlife Crossing & employing & relocating beavers to mitigate climate change and fire threats I read about the zoo's desire for entertainment for tourism. The animals in the zoo deserve larger enclosures, I agree, but to use that concept to justify destroying more and more wildlife's future, native scrub/habitat/corridors is a slippery slope toward destroying the homes of our #cohabitants & further polluting w more cars more energy demands which human & wild Angelenos cannot afford. Please continue to downsize this project to enlarging enclosures only and abandon an amusement park in our neighborhood. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Jordan Neiman

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:29 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: As a longtime resident and frequent visitor of the park, I have some deep concerns about the proposed project. Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through a significant geological feature is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. Despite the Zoo’s insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It’s an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs. We ask that we preserve the very limited and valuable resources of wildlife and habitat that makes Los Angeles so special, to have this jewel of Griffith Park. Thank you. Jordan

Communication from Public

Name: Susana Rinderle
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:36 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I urge you to vote NO on this proposal. As a native Angeleno, Glendale resident, and California Naturalist, I say that this proposal adds negligible value to humans, while destroying precious habitat for wildlife -- including human health and well-being. We can't mourn P-22's death, climate change, and environmental degradation while continuing to make decisions that exacerbate the problem! While Griffith Park contains areas that are already disturbed and could be utilized with smaller resulting impacts, the proposed Zoo expansion adds a 18,000 square foot structure and exports more than 36,000 cubic yards of earth in an undeveloped natural area. The resulting biological impacts would be unavoidable under this proposal. A growing number of studies are showing that even a light amount of human recreation in an area can negatively impact local wildlife. Foraging routes for browsing herbivores can be disturbed by increased human presence. Furthermore, human recreation can lead to an increase in non-native species. If only light human recreation can have such impacts, it is clear that activity as intensive as the proposed project will have long-lasting impacts on the surrounding ecosystem. This Griffith Park ecosystem is the exact location where just last year, LA's famed P-22, a mountain lion protected under California's Endangered Species Act, was euthanized due to complications from the sprawling development and activity that has already occurred in this habitat area. The proposed project purports to add educational value to the public about nature, while ironically destroying the surrounding natural area and replacing it with artificial structures! The Zoo could achieve much stronger educational impacts by conserving the natural land and exposing the public to the importance and beauty of our local existing wildlands. While it is noteworthy that the Focused Recirculated Environmental Impact Report's Project Alternative 1.5 is in many ways superior to many of the Zoo's previous project alternatives (except No Project), I urge decision-makers to reject any proposal that would sever the pristine ridge of the California Planning Area in two.

Communication from Public

Name: Alex
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 12:45 PM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: Stop thinking with your own wallets! There's barely anywhere for native wildlife to call home these days!

Communication from Public

Name: Laura Weekes

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 01:06 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I want to express my strong opposition to the planned LA Zoo expansion which would destroy 16 acres of precious open land in Griffith Park. We cannot afford to lose this chaparral habitat which supports native protected plants and animals. It would be a tragic loss of natural beauty and wildness to excavate Condor Canyon and build a visitors center. Griffith Park is an irreplaceable treasure whose integrity must be preserved. We should not deprive current and future generations of the healing and inspirational experience of unspoiled nature which Griffith Park offers us. We have enough built "entertainment" spaces in our city. We do not need an expanded zoo.

Communication from Public

Name: Kate Oakland

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 01:09 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am vehemently opposed to the LA Zoo expansion project. The land they are planning on using should be left alone for the native and natural wildlife and habitat. Please stop destroying what is left of the LA mountains. We have enough cement already!!

Communication from Public

Name: Ashley Springer

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 01:18 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing in opposition of the LA ZOO REVISED EXPANSION PLAN. I am strongly opposed to the excavation of Condor Canyon and the proposed new event space that will destroy the topography of the ridge line radically changing Griffith Park forever. The area also contains sensitive wildlife and plant habitats and 26 protected trees/shrubs! Please do not approve this plan and help us protect Griffith Park for future generations!

Communication from Public

Name: Alison Boyle

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 01:29 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am opposed to expansion project of the LA Zoo. I prefer the open green spaces and healthy trees and native shrubs rather than supporting the captivity of animals. Thank you for considering my public comment before approving this project.

Communication from Public

Name: Elizabeth Reid-Wainscoat

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 01:41 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez and Neighborhood and Community Enrichment committee members: The Center for Biological Diversity (the “Center”) submits these comments in response to the Los Angeles Zoo’s Vision Plan (“Plan”) and associated Final Environmental Impact Report (“FEIR”). The Center is very concerned with the Plan’s disregard of threatened endangered species and sensitive native landscapes within, and adjacent to, the Zoo. As described in the FEIR, many of the potential environmental impacts by the Vision Plan are “significant and unavoidable.” For this reason, the Center strongly urges Councilmembers to reject the Plan as proposed and instead accept Alternative 1, as described in the Project’s FEIR. Please see the attached letter for more details. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Elizabeth



June 28, 2023

Sent via email

Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez, Chair Neighborhood and Community Enrichment
Committee of the City Council
LA City Council c/o City Clerk
200 North Spring St, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: 21-0828 — Zoo Department report relative to certification of the revised
Environmental Impact Report and project approval for the Los Angeles Zoo Vision Plan**

Dear Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez and Neighborhood and Community Enrichment
committee members:

The Center for Biological Diversity (the “Center”) submits these comments in response to the Los Angeles Zoo’s Vision Plan (“Plan”) and associated Final Environmental Impact Report (“FEIR”). The Center is very concerned with the Plan’s disregard of threatened endangered species and sensitive native landscapes within, and adjacent to, the Zoo. As described in the FEIR, many of the potential environmental impacts by the Vision Plan are “significant and unavoidable.” For this reason, the Center strongly urges Councilmembers to reject the Plan as proposed and instead accept Alternative 1, as described in the Project’s FEIR.

The Center is a non-profit, public interest environmental organization dedicated to the protection of native species and their habitats through science, policy, and environmental law. The Center has over 1.7 million members and online activists throughout California and the United States. The Center and its members have worked for many years to protect imperiled plants and wildlife, open space, air and water quality, and overall quality of life for people in Los Angeles.

As currently proposed, the Plan prioritizes tourist experience over conservation and in doing so, directly contradicts local regulations as well as stated sustainability goals. This blatant disregard of community values that highlight the need for preservation of native habitats and local species is unacceptable. As the climate crisis continues to impact the region, it is imperative that local leaders make smart, science-driven and community supported land-use decisions. The current Plan is a failure on all accounts and should be immediately revised as described in Alternative 1 of the Project’s FEIR.

Our comments are described in more detail below:

I. The Plan Prioritizes Profit and Tourist Experience Over Conservation

Los Angeles County is home to 50 endangered and threatened species at risk of extinction primarily due to habitat loss.¹ While this region is considered a biodiversity hotspot, we are at risk of losing our native species and natural landscapes because of poorly sited development. Protecting our remaining open space is integral to preserving our native biodiversity and ensuring that the natural habitats that have defined our region remain protected for future generations.

The protection of nature and biodiversity is also deeply linked to the welfare of humans. Native landscapes help us regulate our climate, purify our air and water, pollinate our crops and create healthy soil (Lawler et al., 2014). In addition to the direct benefits from access, preservation of our native habitats and the species that rely on them is critical to our long-term health and wellbeing (Martin et al., 2020). Open space has been vital to many communities during the pandemic and provided community spaces for safe socially distanced gatherings. Continued preservation and increased access will help ensure all Angelenos experience the physical and mental health benefits of nature.

The Plan's fundamental flaw is its prioritization of "tourist experience" over the wellbeing of native ecosystems and Angelenos. As a City run facility, the Zoo has an obligation to serve the community that it represents. To argue that it should compete with private run businesses, such as Disneyland, is contradictory to its role as a public agency. Furthermore, the focus on entertainment over conservation directly contradicts the Zoo's own stated mission to "support programs that preserve biodiversity and conserve natural habitat."²

II. The Plan Violates Local Ordinances and Contradicts City Sustainability Goals as well as the State's 30 x 30 Initiative

As the FEIR outlines, 13-plus acres of native habitat communities would likely be "eliminated or substantially altered" if the proposed plan were enacted.

The Plan is in direct contradiction to the goals and best practices outline in the City's Biodiversity Report, Biodiversity Index, and the L.A. Green New Deal.^{3,4} These plans call of all city departments to implement best practices around biodiversity preservation, including the preservation of our remaining natural ecosystems. If the Zoo can't even follow these

¹ UCLA Sustainability Grand Challenge. "Biodiversity Atlas of LA." Accessed November 22, 2021. <https://biodiversityla.org/species/threatened/>

² City of Los Angeles. "About the Los Angeles Zoo." Accessed November 22, 2021, https://www.lazoo.org/about/?gclid=CjwKCAiAnO2MBhApEiwA8q0HYQltNUx0r6hqNh7C23tWMSXkDS-6NB_6uCoZloBzbET6rA5IPViniRoCFJ8QAvD_BwE

³ LA Sanitation and the Environment. "Biodiversity." Accessed November 22, 2021. https://www.lacitysan.org/san/faces/home/portal/s-lsh-es/s-lsh-es-si/s-lsh-es-si-bd?_afLoop=10246292653019023&_afWindowMode=0&_afWindowId=null&_adf.ctrl-state=peusu6snd_1#!%40%40%3F_afWindowId%3Dnull%26_afLoop%3D10246292653019023%26_afWindowMode%3D0%26_adf.ctrl-state%3Dpeusu6snd_5

⁴ City of Los Angeles. "Green New Deal." Accessed November 22, 2021. <https://plan.lamayor.org/>

recommendations then there is little hope that the City will achieve the sustainable future it claims to be striving for.

Finally, the State of California announced in 2020 that it “pledges to conserve 30 percent of land and coastal water by 2030, joining 38 countries in commitment to conservation.”⁵ This will require coordination across all jurisdictions and a commitment from all public agencies to prioritize the preservation of the remaining natural landscapes as well as the restoration of many destroyed and/or degraded ecosystems across our State. Proposals like the Zoo’s planned expansion, are simply something the State cannot afford to approve if we are truly committed to this ambitious and critically important goal.

III. The Plan Would Impair a Critical Wildlife Linkage Area for Mountain Lions

Biodiversity is declining worldwide primarily due to loss of habitat (Chase et al., 2020). The City has an obligation under state law to protect endangered or threatened animal populations, and not approve development projects that may jeopardize the survival of such populations. The mountain lions of the Santa Monica mountains are provisionally listed under the California Endangered Species Act (Yap et al., 2019) and are presently at risk of extinction, primarily due to loss of habitat connectivity and open space caused by poorly sited development and lack of wildlife crossings (Benson et al., 2016, 2019; Gustafson et al., 2018). The City has an obligation not to push this population closer to extinction by allowing further degradation of existing wildlife linkages through poorly sited development. Preserving what little habitat they have left is essential to their survival (Dellinger et al., 2020).

However, the current Plan proposes developing a large area of mountain lion habitat to increase tourism and visitor experience. The Plan argues that this is a necessary sacrifice and it will be partially mitigated by the inclusion of an enhanced mountain lion exhibit. The idea that a Zoo would actively destroy known habitat of a listed keystone species and replace it with an “enhanced” enclosure for said species goes against all best practices for endangered species management. Captive breeding is a last resort and should never replace the protection and preservation of critical habitat. This is common knowledge amongst conservation practitioners and thus the current Plan’s blatant disregard of these best practices is especially appalling. The Zoo has ample opportunity to improve animal welfare and visitor experience within the existing footprint of the Zoo. To argue otherwise is in direct opposition to the Zoo’s mission, the City’s sustainability goals and the State’s commitment to preserve native biodiversity.

IV. Conclusion

The Zoo has an obligation to serve the community as well as protect the region’s native biodiversity. The Plan as proposed, is a blatant dismissal of community values and conservation best practices. For all of these reasons, the Center encourages the City Council to adopt

⁵ California Government. “Governor Newsom Launches Innovative Strategies to Use California Land to Fight Climate Change, Conserve Biodiversity and Boost Climate Resilience.” Published on October 7, 2020. <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/10/07/governor-newsom-launches-innovative-strategies-to-use-california-land-to-fight-climate-change-protect-biodiversity-and-boost-climate-resilience/>

Alternative 1 as the only acceptable proposal for the Zoo's expansion. This will ensure the Zoo stays true to its mission and the goals of the City that value the preservation of our natural landscapes.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



J.P. Rose
Senior Attorney
Center for Biological Diversity
660 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, California 90017
jrose@biologicaldiversity.org



Elizabeth Reid-Wainscoat
Urban Wildlands Campaigner
Center for Biological Diversity
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Los Angeles, California 90017
ereidwainscoat@biologicaldiversity.org

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Communication from Public

Name: Andrew Steinitz
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 01:55 PM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: Please do not take away so much of Griffith park so the LA Zoo can make more money. The irony of taking away land from wild animals to imprison others in the name of “conservation” must not be lost on you. I hope that you will consider rejecting the expansion of the zoo entirely. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Christian de la Torre
Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:01 PM
Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: In the quest for honoring our animals at the LA Zoo, this proposed revised-vision-plan- will not only dishonor our animals- but it will destroy our most precious and beloved blessing: Griffith Park. This park is the natural haven for growing our protected trees, shrubs, and providing our wildlife with shelter and sustenance. This will be a scourge on Griffith Park, and will ruin the aesthetics and the wonderful hiking trails that many depend on. Hiking trails and viewing nature is a essential to our mental health and physical fitness. Do Not Proceed With This. With gratefulness and all thankfulness- for keeping Griffith Park- Griffith Park.??

Communication from Public

Name: The Trace Club

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:03 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Excavating a 60-foot deep Condor Canyon and altering a significant geological feature within Griffith Park would not only be a destructive endeavor but also a costly one. Such an undertaking would irrevocably transform the park, both aesthetically and ecologically. It is crucial to recognize that once this development occurs, there is no turning back. The natural charm that Griffith Park currently possesses would be forever lost. Furthermore, the proposed placement of the California Visitor Center on top of a ridgeline poses a grave threat to the park's natural topography. This decision would disrupt the harmonious flow of the land and detract from the park's inherent beauty. It is essential to reconsider or eliminate this plan in order to preserve the park's unique and fragile landscape. While the Zoo may argue that a significant portion of the 16 acres of native habitat has already been disturbed, it is important to acknowledge the presence of rare and sensitive plants and wildlife in this area. This intact chaparral habitat should not be subjected to further development. Additionally, it is worth noting that the area also harbors 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs, further highlighting the need for their preservation. Griffith Park is a rare and finite space. Its natural beauty and ecological significance should be cherished and protected. Instead of allowing further development that irreparably alters its landscape, we should embrace our responsibility to safeguard this sanctuary for future generations to enjoy. Once lost, the natural allure of Griffith Park can never be fully recovered, and the impacts on the delicate ecosystem will be long-lasting. Let us recognize the value of preserving this exceptional natural haven and take the necessary steps to ensure its conservation for years to come.

Communication from Public

Name: Julio Soria

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:08 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Excavation of 60-foot deep Condor Canyon through a significant geological feature is destructive and expensive and will radically change Griffith Park forever, aesthetically and ecologically. Placement of the new event space – the California Visitor Center – on top of a ridgeline will destroy the natural Park topography and should be reconsidered or eliminated. Despite the Zoo's insistence that much of the 16 acres of native habitat is disturbed already, this area contains rare and sensitive plants and wildlife. It's an intact chaparral habitat that should not be developed since it also contains 26 City Protected Trees/Shrubs. The city should be protecting habitat, increasing tree canopy, and building new parks in high-needs communities, not allowing the development of precious native habitat we have left.

Communication from Public

Name: Bryan Shelton

Date Submitted: 06/27/2023 02:10 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to oppose the Los Angeles Zoo's expansion plan as it currently stands. We must protect the undeveloped land in Griffith Park, the green jewel at the heart of our city. While I love the Zoo (I am a member) and I fully support the Zoo's mission of conservation, outreach and education, plans for modernization and evolution cannot come at the expense of razing undeveloped lands and disrupting the wildlife (native species) that currently call it home.