



Saving Wildlife. Enriching Our Communities. Creating Connections to Nature.

April 21, 2026

LOS ANGELES ZOO
5333 Zoo Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Phone (323) 644-4200
www.lazoo.org

Honorable Members of the Budget and Finance Committee
Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

KAREN BASS
Mayor

NITHYA RAMAN
Council Member 4th
District

**SUBJECT: ZOO DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO THE MAYOR'S
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 (C.F. 26-0600)**

Honorable Councilmembers:

ZOO
COMMISSIONERS

KAREN B. WINNICK
President

BERNARDO SILVA
Vice President

JUSTIN MIKITA

DARYL SMITH

ELNIE VANNATIM

The Zoo Department appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the Mayor's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 (C.F. 26-0600). The Proposed Budget for the Zoo Department provides the resources to support the Zoo's efforts to continue to maintain a safe, welcoming and inclusive destination of the greater Los Angeles community.

This proposed budget also supports the Zoo's priorities to deliver mission focused programs and services that save wildlife, enrich our communities, and connect people with nature. As the Zoo nears its 60th anniversary in November 2026, we look to building momentum in addressing the critical needs of the Zoo's campus and aged infrastructure.

The Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 provides resources to address deferred and ongoing maintenance, as well as capital financing to support capital infrastructure improvements that will lend toward greater potential for increased attendance and revenue. The Zoo is governed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for its exhibitor's license and is also required to meet standards in order to maintain accreditation under the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Therefore, this support is critical to ensuring that Zoo continues to be able to meet the standards required by these regulatory agencies, as well as, to maintain the facility in a safe manner to meet the needs of the animals, staff, and guests while minimizing the potential for risk and liability.

DENISE M. VERRET
Chief Executive Officer
& Zoo Director

The organizational chart that follows this letter provides a breakdown of the programs and operations managed by the Department.



AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Zoo Department is appreciative of the resources provided in the Proposed Budget and has no requested changes. My staff and I look forward to working with your Committee and the City Council throughout the budget deliberation process.

Respectfully Submitted,

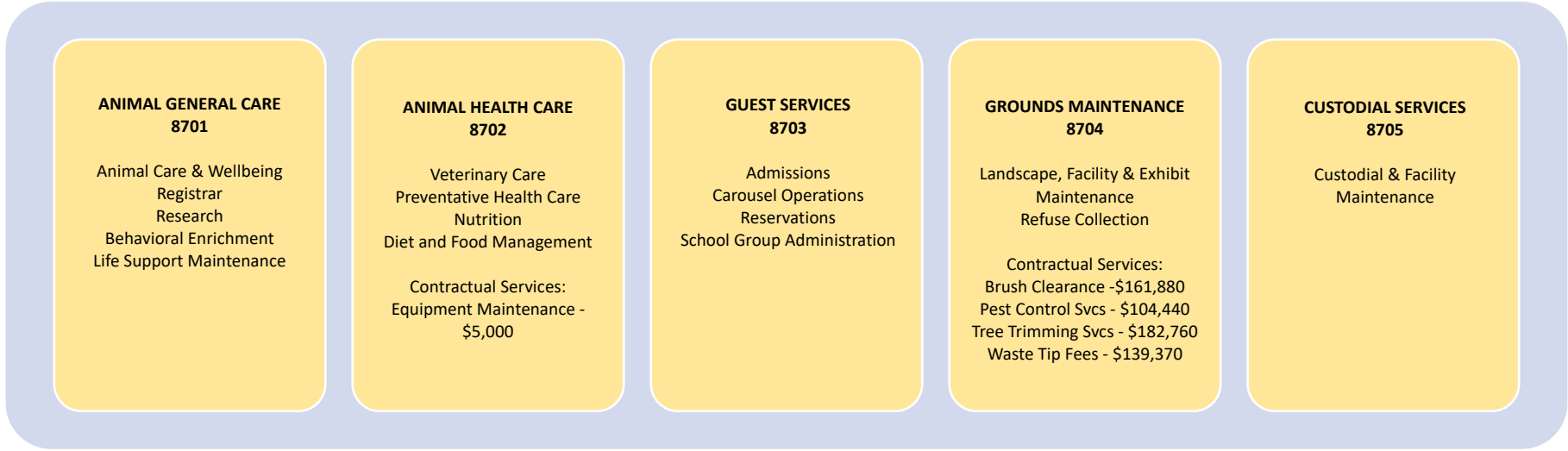
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Verret". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denise M. Verret
Chief Executive Officer & Zoo Director

DMV:MK:cf



**FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET
DEPARTMENT OF THE ZOO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Provides for the daily care and welfare of the Zoo's animals; participates in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums wildlife management programs

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Provides veterinary care and health care management for the Zoo's animal collection by performing diagnostic tests, preventative health care, and surgical procedures

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Manages general admissions operations and reservations for programs and classes through onsite and online sales; facilitates transactions for other fee based programs and activities

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

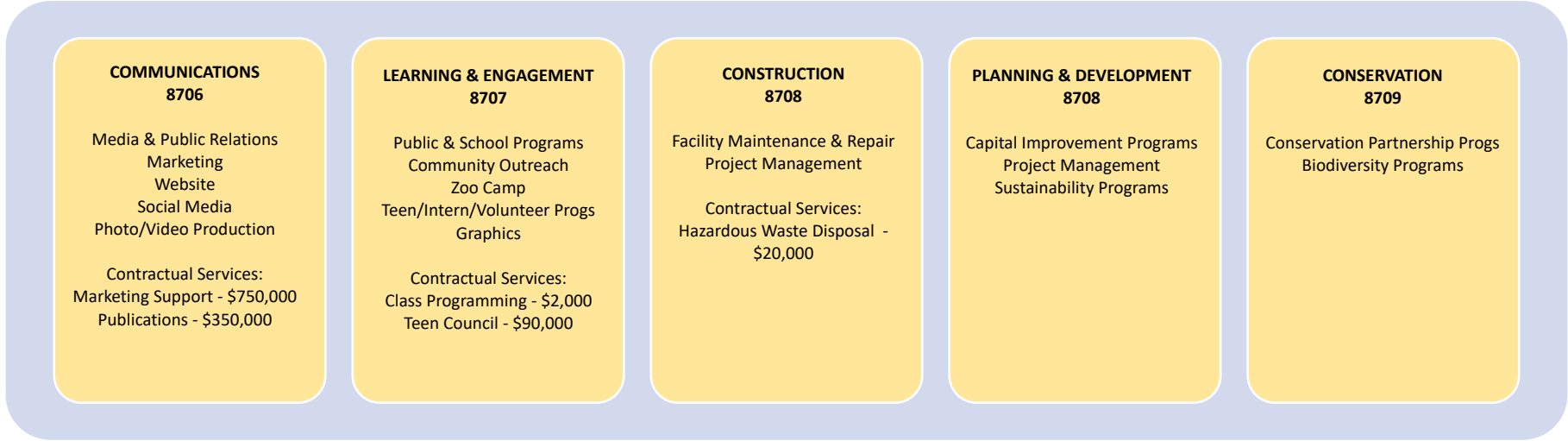
Provides landscape maintenance, coordinates brush clearance removal and tree trimming, and develops sustainable horticultural practices that minimize water usage and encourages native species

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Provides custodial services for public and staff areas and supports event operations



**FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET
DEPARTMENT OF THE ZOO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Manages Zoo public relations and marketing functions, including all external messaging, social media, publications, and website platforms; coordinates all commercial filming and photography activities

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Develops, implements, and evaluates mission-based Zoo programming including community engagement, outreach, camps, classes, school and teacher programs, on grounds experiences, animal presentations, and demonstrations; manages Zoo volunteer program, graphics and signage, and audio visual services

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Administers facility repairs, maintenance, and construction services

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

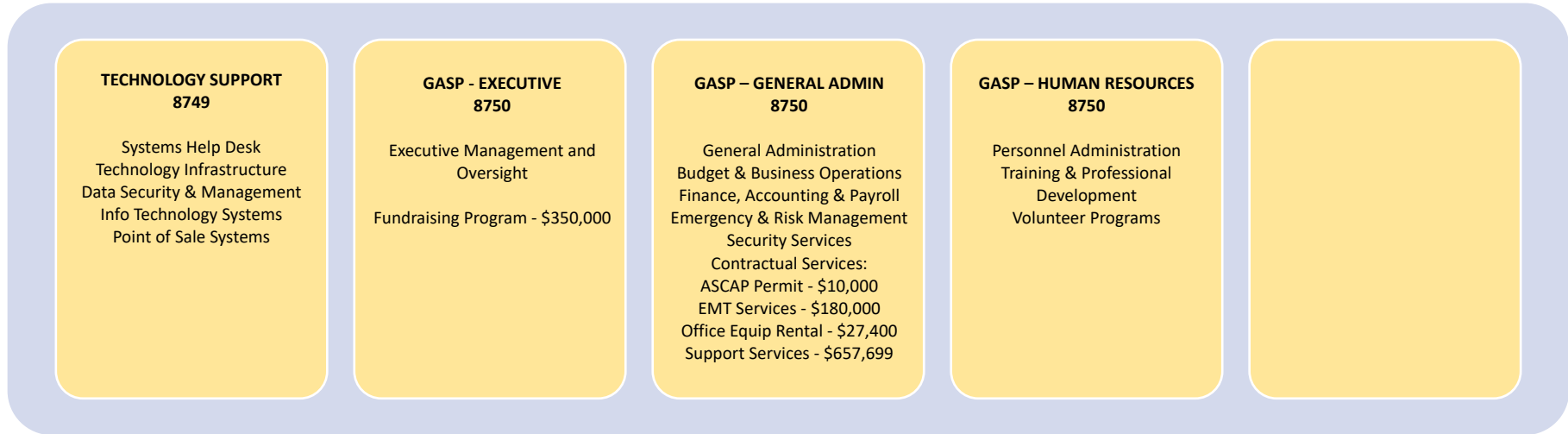
Manages in-house project management and design, coordinates with others on development and implementation of Capital Improvement program, as well as facilitates the Zoo's sustainability program

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Develops and manages a multi-disciplinary conservation program that integrates holistic biodiversity conservation, maintenance of ecosystems functions, and collaborations with local and international stakeholders



**FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET
DEPARTMENT OF THE ZOO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Manages and provides support for all information technology services; reviews and assesses applications for continual improvement and development of efficiencies

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Provides executive leadership and management oversight

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Provides administrative management and support for budget, finance & accounting operations, contracts & procurement, emergency & risk management, security services, and general Zoo business operations

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS

Manages human resources operations that include hiring, training, professional development, and discipline and supports the administration of the volunteer program

PROGRAMS/OPERATIONS