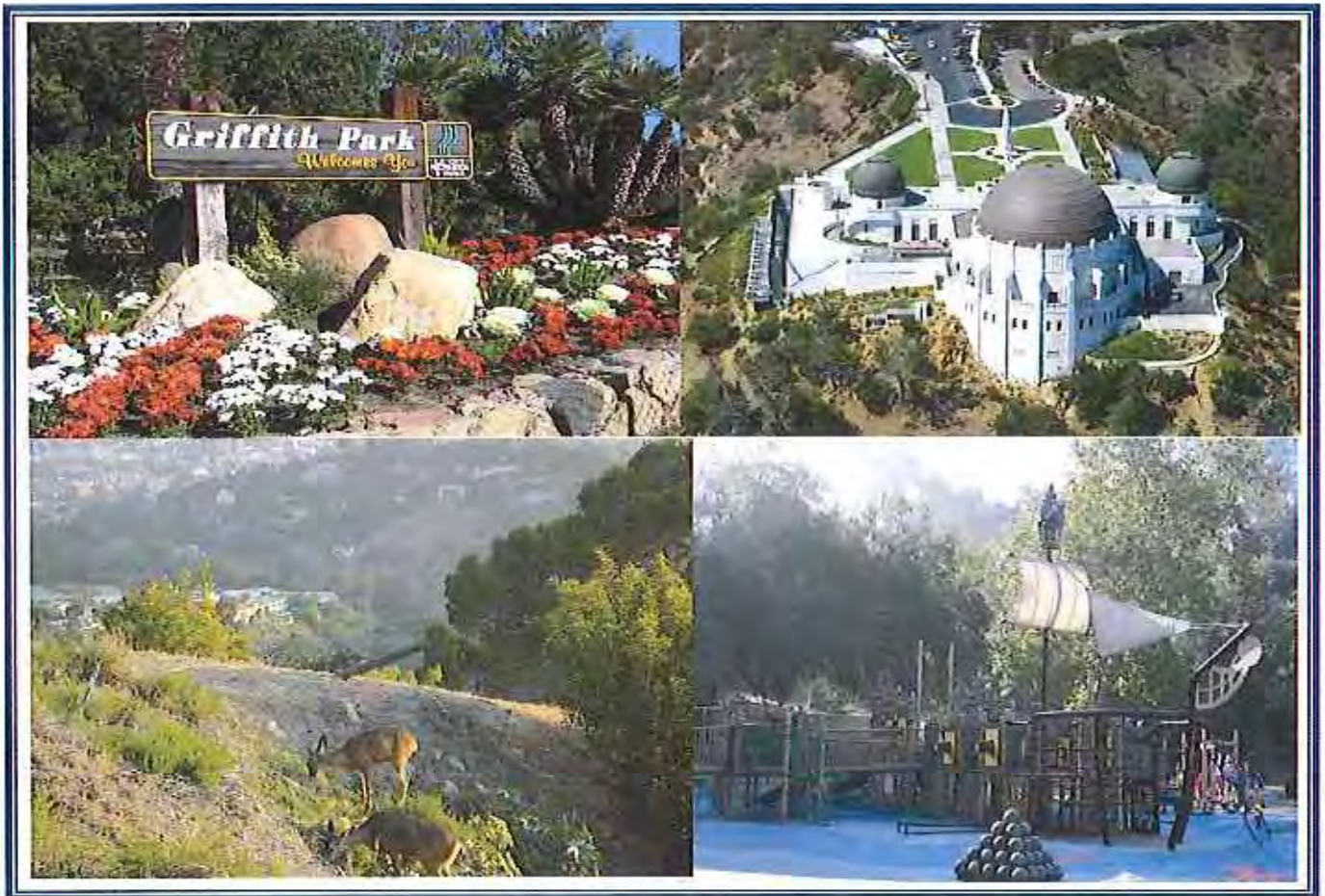


CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

**A VISION FOR GRIFFITH PARK**  
*URBAN WILDERNESS IDENTITY*



Michael Shull, Interim General Manager  
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS



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### **THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSIONERS**

Barry A. Sanders, President  
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Jonathan Williams, Commissioner

### **THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT**

Michael Shull, Interim General Manager  
Jon Kirk Mukri, Former General Manager  
Regina Adams, Executive Officer  
Vicki Israel, Assistant General Manager  
Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager

### **GRIFFITH PARK WORKING GROUP**

Louis Alvarado, CD 4 Appointee  
Richard Boggy, Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council  
Lynn Brown, Corral 38 Equestrian Trails  
Clare Darden, Griffith Jenkins Griffith Charitable Trust  
Jeff Gardner, Atwater Village Neighborhood Council  
George Grace, Franklin Hills Residents Association  
Gerry Hans, Oaks Homeowners Association  
Craig Kessler, Public Links Golf Association  
Jose Sigala, CD 4 Appointee  
Bernadette Soter, Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council  
Susan Swan, Hollywood United Neighborhood Council  
Valarie Vanaman, Los Feliz Improvement Association

### ***Alternatives***

Lucinda Phillips, Jim Gilberts, Chris Laib, Rulon Openshaw

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION TO THE GRIFFITH PARK VISION

#### I. DEFINITION

There are several accepted definitions of the term Urban Wilderness. For the purpose of the Vision for Griffith Park, Urban Wilderness Identity shall refer to the dedication to preserving, to the extent practicable, the unique character of Griffith Park with particular focus on the following:

- Biodiversity - a wide range of species, both of plants and animals;
- Native species - considered use of local varieties rather than exotic species;
- Minimal maintenance required for viability - plants that can survive without frequent waterings, can withstand local pollution levels, and do not depend on infusions of fertilizers or other periodic soil amendments;
- Unstructured aesthetic - plants allowed to grow as they wish, where they wish, with minimal space devoted to paved walkways, trimmed grass, or other artificial environments; and
- A built environment that reflects these characteristics and promotes the sense of place that is characteristic of Griffith Park.

It is intended that this Urban Wilderness Identity shall be applied to the Park as a whole and defined separately from the Wilderness Area as identified as a contributing element of the park's historic nature.

#### II. SIGNIFICANCE

Griffith Park, the largest City-owned Park in the City of Los Angeles, comprises 4355.87 acres of dedicated parkland. It is the largest natural wilderness within the City's park system, containing numerous distinct ecosystems that nurture numerous native plants and wildlife species. The Park is a designated Significant Ecological Area in the County of Los Angeles General Plan, and is considered an essential link in the Southern California wildlife corridor stretching from the Santa Monica to the Verdugo Mountain Ranges. Situated wholly within the *California Floristic Province*, considered one of 34 biodiversity hotspots for conservation worldwide by Conservation International, the Park requires special consideration due to its high level of diversity, endemism, and the degree to which it is threatened.

At the same time Griffith Park has more facilities than any park in the City with more major attractions, museums, developed playgrounds, picnic areas, golf courses, sports venues, pools, commercial concessions, educational facilities, camps, special amenities, roads and parking spaces than any other. In terms of core significance, many of these manmade enjoyments are important and some have been identified as character-defining features of the park through the park's designation as a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument. As such, modifications to these features so designated shall be reviewed as appropriate by the Office of Historic Resources. The Griffith Observatory, which was part of the original vision for the park, is a Historic Cultural Monument in its own right. Most major cities can boast landscaped parks with built amenities. Los Angeles is fortunate in that it additionally offers an authentic and accessible wilderness-like area within its urban core.

The defining characteristic of this resource can be traced to the original intent of the Park's benefactor, Colonel Griffith J. Griffith. Colonel Griffith donated his land to the City to provide Angelenos with a natural respite from the surrounding metropolis. He envisioned a park that would be a "safety valve" from urban pressures providing "open space – rustic and available to all."<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Griffith wrote:

*Give nature a chance to do her good work and nature will give every person a greater opportunity in health, strength and mental power.<sup>2</sup>*

Colonel Griffith articulated his vision in 1896. Since then Los Angeles has become increasingly densely populated but Griffith Park has managed to retain much of its great open space and its ability to put people in touch with California's local landscapes and natural history. With rising transportation costs making it more challenging for some to visit State and Federal natural lands, Colonel Griffith's gift remains a unique resource within the City.

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<sup>1</sup> Eberts, Mike, *Griffith Park: A Centennial History*, Historical Society of Southern California (1996).

<sup>2</sup> Griffith, Griffith J., *Parks, Boulevards and Playgrounds*, Prison Reform League (1910).

### III. THE VISIONING PROCESS

In June 2003 the City embarked on a new master plan for Griffith Park that would guide its management and use for the next 25 years. Extensive input from the park-using public who initiated the successful Griffith Park Urban Wilderness Petition and filed extensive comments on the Draft was collected in three subsequent workshops. The Plan that was in development, known as the Melendrez Draft, had a commercialized vision for the park and was ultimately rejected by the Councilmember of the District, the General Manager of the Department of Recreation and Parks and the public. The Councilmember then established the Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group to work with the Department staff to develop a new vision for the park. The result of that process is this Griffith Park Vision.

The Working Group determined that many of the Draft's conclusions should be reconsidered. The panel then began compiling inventories of Griffith Park's major user groups, recreational amenities, cultural venues, buildings and built elements, mobility features and management structures. It read the Park's history and considered the role of Griffith Park within the context of the City's municipal park system. It studied data about the Park's wilderness areas to understand its native species, human-wildlife interface, and its role in the greater Santa Monica Mountains ecosystem. It took into account the thousands of comments on the released Draft filed with the Recreation and Parks Department and listened to public comment made at each of its monthly public meetings. It acquainted itself with the rapidly growing urban wilderness movement that was preserving old and creating new natural parks in major North American cities.

Midway through its activities, the wildfire of May 8, 2007, blackened more than 800 acres of Griffith Park and reaffirmed that the Park is at a critical juncture. In its aftermath, the Recreation and Parks Department convened a Fire Recovery Task Force composed of scientists and professionals from federal, state and local agencies and science-based non-profits. From the Task Force grew the first Griffith Park Wildlife Management Plan<sup>3</sup>. Commissioned by the Department, the Plan documents the Park's biodiversity, assists in its land management decisions, and recommends ways to ensure the successful co-existence between the wildlife species supported by the Park and its human users. The Working Group supports the Wildlife Management Plan's recommendations and includes that Plan's executive summary and species lists as Appendix 1 to this Visioning document.

While this Visioning Document is not a Master Plan for Griffith Park, it is the intent of the Working Group, the Department, the City, and the public that the ideas contained herein be used to guide decisions made for Griffith Park until such a time that a full Master Plan be developed and adopted. A Master Plan for Griffith Park would be expected to follow the Vision for the Park as outlined in this Plan, and also contain specific projects for the Park which are environmentally sound and fiscally sustainable. New development

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1

within the Park should reflect the natural aesthetic qualities inherent within the Park's natural Urban Wilderness Identity.

It is the intent of this Vision to integrate the planning and decision-making processes encompassed herein with the evaluation of potential environmental effects as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the associated City and State CEQA Guidelines. Currently, however, this document does not constitute a "project" as defined by CEQA (Guideline sec. 15378(a)). A "project" is defined as the whole of an action that has the potential for resulting in either a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change on the environment. Consequently, approval of this document is not subject to CEQA review requirements because there are no underlying actions or activities that will have a physical effect on the environment.

Until such time as a Master Plan is developed in accordance with this Vision that contains specific actions, which constitute a project under CEQA, there will be no CEQA compliance requirements. Any projects proposed in connection with the intent of the Vision prior to the adoption of a Master Plan will be evaluated independently for potential environmental effects on a case-by-case basis in compliance with CEQA requirements as they apply.

#### IV. MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISION

Griffith Park is one of a system of parks operated by the Recreation and Parks Department of the City of Los Angeles, several of which are unique properties with defined purposes derived from their historic, perceived or actual roles. For example, Barnsdall Park has been designated as an Art Park and Runyon Canyon operates as an off-leash dog park. Recognizing Griffith Park's unique identity that contains an easily accessible and natural open space for the enjoyment of free recreation, a destination for nature appreciation, a linchpin in the health and survival of Southern California's native ecosystems, a variety of built recreational amenities unique within the City, this Vision includes among its recommendations:

*Griffith Park's longstanding role and function as the City park system's greatest natural, open space be recognized and that the Park be designated, managed and maintained with an Urban Wilderness Identity, with the recognized goal to preserve, enhance and sustain the rich biodiversity that exists in the Park today.*

*Griffith Park's longstanding role and function as a place of free enjoyment be continued in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with fee-based activities (not including special events) kept to the status quo and such charges held to the minimum necessary for continued operation.*

*Griffith Park's established recreational, cultural and educational uses and users*

*be recognized.*

*Griffith Park's Los Angeles River frontage and lands under Recreation and Park control be restored as a riparian habitat for nature viewing, education and enjoyment, in keeping with the recommendations found within the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan.*

*In keeping with Griffith Park's wilderness interior that the Toyon Canyon Landfill be rehabilitated as a natural, passive-use meadow.*

*Griffith Park's natural areas be expanded by acquiring remaining open spaces within and around its borders.*

*A Park Advisory Board be established to work with and advise Griffith Park's management on maintaining the Park with an Urban Wilderness Identity and oversee implementation of the goals and recommendations in this Visioning document.*

All recommendations contained in this Vision will be considered as the funding for and feasibility of such recommendations are identified. Recommendations carried over into any subsequent Master Plan for Griffith Park would require identification of the resources necessary to implement those recommendations.

## **V. DESIRED OUTCOMES**

### **A. To Be Initiated Immediately**

Promote and encourage an Urban Wilderness Identity for the entirety of Griffith Park.

Adopt the Griffith Park Wildlife Management Plan as recommended within that plan.

Establish the Park Advisory Board and initiate regular meetings to oversee implementation of the Griffith Park Vision goals.

Investigate opportunities to create linkages between Griffith Park, Elysian Park and the Los Angeles River to increase recreation and open space in Northeast Los Angeles.

The completion of a permanent stage, funded by Prop K, located in the grass area of the Old Zoo, to accommodate The Independent Shakespeare Company for their yearly Shakespeare in the Park Festival, The Symphony in

the Glen and other appropriate out-door stage productions which are free to the public.

To assist in promoting Griffith Park and all its varied attributes including nature, sports and culture. To create free events, such as Family Movie Night at the Merry-Go-Round, and other passive activities.

**B. *One to Five Year Goals***

Staff the position of Ecologist to oversee, in conjunction with maintenance management, the implementation of the Wildlife Management Plan's practices throughout the Park.

The completion of two, junior regulation size, baseball fields, funded by Prop K.

Increase maintenance staffing throughout the Park.

Begin repair of degraded ecosystems and watersheds.

Begin restoration of degraded historical features.

Implement a remote parking system with shuttles for peak-use weekends.

Work with the City and County to increase public transportation to and within the Park.

Consolidate Central Service Yard functions to reclaim as much area as possible for active and passive recreation along the Los Angeles River.

Complete construction of a pedestrian/equestrian bridge over the Los Angeles River to connect Atwater Village and the Atwater Rancho Equestrian community to the Park.

Designate the Nevin's Barberry mitigation site that was established as a result of the taking of the plant during the Griffith Observatory Restoration Project, located approximately 2.5 miles north of the Observatory off of the Toyon Trail on a north-facing slope at an elevation of 1,000 feet, as a Rare Native Plant Preserve.

**C. *Five to Ten Year Goals***

Evaluate results of one to five year goals.

Rehabilitate Toyon Canyon as a passive-use meadow.

Switch from asphalt to permeable surface parking lots throughout the Park as major maintenance comes due.

Promote restoration of the Headworks area of the Park consistent with open space goals and the Urban Wilderness Identity.

Establish Griffith Park as a civic venue for nature study and environmental awareness.

**D. *Ten to Fifteen Year Goals***

Evaluate results of five to ten year goals.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **A VISION FOR GRIFFITH PARK**

#### **I. AN URBAN WILDERNESS IDENTITY**

Griffith Park contains a natural refuge surrounded by an intense urban environment. The Park is characterized by extensive open space that connects people with the natural heritage of California, as well the physical and cultural history of Los Angeles. Historically, a diversity of uses has been accommodated within the Park. However there is a growing recognition that one of the Park's greatest values for 21<sup>st</sup> century Los Angeles is its ability to reconnect people with the natural world. To accomplish this, the primary management principle for this Park should be to preserve the natural resources and ecosystems in order to enhance the Park's undeveloped areas. This management principle will establish a unique Urban Wilderness Identity for Griffith Park, one which encourages visitors to experience these wilderness areas.

The Park will remain an oasis in our urban environment. The majority of the Park will continue to be comprised of natural terrain with native Southern California landscape that also serves as a habitat for California wildlife. Trails for hikers and equestrians will continue to wind through the hills and flats, taking care to minimize impacts on protected natural systems. The natural watershed, including the Los Angeles River, which is under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers, will be a key element of the Park's sustainable infrastructure system. Environmentally sensitive and responsible practices incorporated throughout the Park will demonstrate to Park visitors the many ways we can operate in harmony with the natural world.

Griffith Park has a rich history. There are many stories to be told, and there are remnants of earlier days that remain in the Park today. Historic areas within the Park, shall be considered "cultural landscapes" that need preservation and rehabilitation, as have been identified by the recent designation of Griffith Park as a Historic Cultural Monument. The Park's developed areas, historical and cultural elements, and interpretative exhibits are valuable resources to be administered and preserved consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

Sustaining and protecting the Park's ecosystem will guide maintenance and repairs as well as future improvements or development. The Park in its entirety shall be treated in a way consistent with its urban wilderness identity. Those areas of the Park which have been defined as the Wilderness Area per the Griffith Park Historic Resources Map shall be treated in such a way as to protect that historically sensitive resource. Those areas of the Park which are currently developed should be treated with best management practices which enhance the urban wilderness identity of the Park. Consistent with this Vision, whether major or minor in scope, all work in the Park should be designed and executed in harmony with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity. Concepts such as watershed

management, storm water retention and filtering, natural drainage, recycling of waste, reforestation and habitat protection should be integrated into the Park's ecosystem, which includes both the natural Park areas and the developed areas.

## **II. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **A. Manage the entirety of the Park Consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity**

1. Maintain the wilderness area of the Park as a natural area.
2. Minimize the impact of intensive uses.
3. Identify and preserve historic and cultural Park resources.
4. Promote natural qualities, minimize new urban intrusions in the Wilderness Area and provide for informal recreation.
5. Rehabilitate, to the extent possible Headworks, Toyon Canyon Landfill and other such facilities as natural areas.
6. Consider for acquisition all available contiguous property, including undeveloped land to the west of the Park, for use as public open space and native habitat.
7. Evaluate new uses, programs and facilities, or expansion of existing uses, programs and facilities, against the criteria of enhancing the Park's natural attributes and resources, and preserving and maintaining the Urban Wilderness Identity.
8. Manage Park programming and events in such a way as to minimize the impact to the wilderness area of the park.

### **B. Implement Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Programs and Policies Within the Park**

1. Maintain natural resources within the Park.
2. Implement a watershed management system that maximizes natural drainage systems, retention of storm water, filtering and discharging the water table, and connections to the Los Angeles River.
3. Restore and/or rehabilitate natural habitat and native vegetation.

4. Recycle and reuse Park waste.
5. Increase and facilitate wildlife corridors: (1) between habitats within the Park; (2) to natural areas contiguous to the Park, especially the Los Angeles River and land areas to the west, allowing better ecological connectivity of the entire Santa Monica Mountain Range.
6. Improve parking surfaces and systems to reduce heat and to increase permeability.

C. Improve Park Mobility

1. Make the Park universally accessible while protecting the natural environment.
2. In keeping with the Urban Wilderness Identity, develop a comprehensive transportation system that provides circulation within the Park.
3. Develop maps and signage that are consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.

D. Promote an Urban Wilderness Identity in the Park Reinforced by the Design of Facilities and Amenities

1. Define and consistently reinforce the unique character of the Park.
2. Develop and implement design guidelines throughout the Park for improvements and repairs to existing facilities, amenities and infrastructure.
3. Develop Park signage and Park information consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

E. Focus Park Management on the Urban Wilderness Identity and Improve Accountability and Effectiveness

1. All personnel of Recreation and Parks are responsible for ensuring that the Park maintains its Urban Wilderness Identity consistent with the principles of this Vision.
2. Create and sustain volunteer opportunities that promote long-

term community stewardship of the Park.

3. Continue to promote the existing diversity of recreation and enjoyment by individuals and groups, and improve management of all special events to minimize impacts to the Park.
4. Increase dedicated staff with special expertise on natural communities, historic and cultural resources, and resource management.
5. In consultation with the community, consistent with established Department policies, establish a permanent Park Advisory Board to assist in achieving this Vision of Griffith Park.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE HUMAN DIMENSION**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Foreseeing the day when park land would be a limited resource Colonel Griffith specifically enjoined that Griffith Park be a free public park in perpetuity so that "plain people" could enjoy the curative powers of open space – available to all. Over the years, human enjoyment of the Park has developed largely in step with its benefactor's vision: the Park's established user groups share with its donor an appreciation of its unique role as a respite from urban pressures through a mix of both passive and active recreational opportunities.

In planning for the future of the Park, it is important to take into account its current human dimension and recognize who its human visitors are, and how, when, where and why they make recreational use of the Park. These users include hikers and walkers, picnickers, students, equestrians, bicyclists, runners, active sport participants (who play golf, soccer, baseball, tennis, volleyball and basketball), people who swim for sport and fitness, visitors to its museums and major attractions, patrons of children's camps and individuals using the public space for meetings and activities. A detailed statistical study of park users and a needs assessment for future uses should be undertaken in order to guide park planning. Once an understanding is gained of the Park's human dimension it can be joined to an understanding of its plant and animal world to produce a plan for the Park that is compatible with Urban Wilderness Identity and that equitably provides for its users.

#### **II. HIKERS**

Hikers are not only the largest user group in Griffith Park - almost twenty-five percent (25%) of its visitors hike or walk - they are one of the oldest. During his brief service as a City of Los Angeles Park Commissioner in 1903, Colonel Griffith pioneered the first access for hikers, creating a road from Crystal Springs to the narrow canyon at the foot of Bee Rock. It became a popular route for early hikers in Griffith Park that is still used today.

Hiking is part of the Park's most accessible form of recreation. People of all ages hike and they come from every ethnic group and social class. The reasons people hike in the Park are as diverse as the people themselves: health and fitness, reinforcement of family ties, sociability, personal relaxation, nature appreciation and escape from urban pressures. The State of California's 2005 survey of recreation trends bears out this form of recreation's centrality to Park enjoyment. Among all Californians, recreational walking in the outdoors ranks first, wildlife viewing third, and trail hiking fourth in popularity.

Although most Griffith Park hikers walk individually or in small groups, the Park is a focal point for organized hiking. Park rangers lead interpretative hikes; scouting organizations, children's day camps and the Park's resident boys' and girls' camps offer hikes for kids; and established entities ranging from the Los Angeles Unified School District to the Sierra Club hold periodic nature hikes. Since the early 1960s, the Sierra Club has also sponsored year-round evening hikes in Griffith Park, attracting hundreds of hikers each week.

Many regular hikers prefer to begin their excursions in the morning or towards the onset of evening, avoiding the absence of shade and the higher temperatures and somnolence of mid-day. Griffith Park's wildlife are more easily heard and seen, as are the sights and smells of its plant communities, at these times. Those who drive to the Park generally find parking near the initial road or trail head they select. All hikers do not arrive by car, however. Some who hike on a regular basis walk into the Park from access points on all sides. Other hikers arrive by public transit and choose from various stops that place them in the Park or near its boundaries in relatively close proximity to its roads and trail heads.

Hikers typically make few demands on the Park. They generally bring their own water and leave behind little trash. If trash cans are absent, a "pack it in, pack it out" ethic prevails. The installation of waste bag dispensers at several points in the Park has encouraged dog-walkers to clean up after their pets and, increasingly, responsible owners are bringing their own bags for this purpose. A major personal safety and security issue for hikers was resolved a decade ago with the closure of the Park's interior paved roads. The resultant safety and tranquility transformed the roads into ideal routes for low and moderately skilled hikers. The paved road closures also opened them up for bicyclists and parents of infants in strollers to exercise in a traffic-free zone and provided equestrians and trail runners safe passage to trail heads.

### III. PICNICKERS

More than a million people a year enjoy picnicking in Griffith Park and using the space for family gatherings such as birthdays, weddings and quinceañeras. The Park provides a welcoming backyard where families can gather together. Annually, more people come to Griffith Park for this use than to any other park in the municipal system. The Park features more than a dozen major, free, developed picnic grounds, as well as four group picnic areas available by reservation only and one group area accessible on a first-come basis. Additionally, there are green spaces throughout the Park that are used as settings for informal, blanket-style picnics: Park Central, Griffith Park Recreation Center, Mulholland Fountain, Vermont Canyon, Western Canyon and Bronson Canyon are just a few of these locales.

### **A. Family Picnicking**

Griffith Park offers picnickers a range of settings from intimate nooks for quiet enjoyment to areas roomy enough for a child's birthday party. In addition to providing tables, benches and other amenities such as grills, drinking fountains and restrooms at these sites, the Park's free developed playgrounds and play structures are typically located at or near its picnic areas. Notable among the playgrounds is Shane's Inspiration, the first universally accessible playground within the City of Los Angeles. As a group, Griffith Park picnickers are self-directed. They tend to bring their own provisions, camp furniture and blankets, co-exist peaceably with each other, and make few demands beyond maintenance and clean-up. Occasional infractions by this large, diverse group can include taping off areas for exclusive use, un-permitted play structures and amplified sounds.

Although the Park attracts picnickers from all backgrounds, on week-ends and holidays Hispanic picnickers are typically in the majority. This cultural group's enjoyment of picnicking is borne out by a ten-year United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service/BLM study confirming that Hispanic Californians' first recreational preference is for day-long extended-family outings in a green setting involving extensive onsite meal preparation. A State of California survey found that these users desire more opportunities to walk outdoors for fitness and fun.<sup>4</sup> The close proximity of trails to picnic areas allows them to do this, making the Park an attractive destination.

### **B. Permit Picnicking for Groups**

The Crystal Springs group picnic area is the only area that can be reserved for group use in Griffith Park. It offers three picnic pads with tables and barbecues on shaded slabs, a volleyball court, restrooms and parking. The term "picnicking" is elastic in this context. While social celebrations and company gatherings are held at Crystal Springs, large public events such as cooking expositions and health and fitness jamborees – often requiring signage, stages, canopies and booths – are also held there. Paid monitoring by Park Rangers is mandated for events exceeding 300 persons or serving alcohol, and organizers are sometimes required to hire maintenance personnel for post-picnic clean-up. Because the area is adjacent to other public uses, the impact a group event will have on neighboring recreational users and the Park itself is taken into account in the awarding of permits. The fees charged for permits are determined by the number of persons (up to 800), number and type of temporary structures, and use of electricity and personnel from the Department of Recreation and Parks.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 3 hereto.

### **C. The Issue of Displacement**

During the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the City's Park Commission made it a priority to establish formal picnic grounds in Griffith Park. Decades later, new types of recreation were introduced into the Park and, with the exception of Fern Dell, the Park's historic picnic grounds vanished or contracted, displaced by built facilities or taken by condemnation for public works. Because picnickers have no advocacy group that speaks specifically for them, it is incumbent on Park managers and the public to ensure that the needs of this large user group are both represented and balanced with the needs of other park user groups.

## **IV. EQUESTRIANS**

Equestrians are Griffith Park's original user group. Horses have been ridden within its boundaries since Rancho days. Colonel Griffith prided himself on his horsemanship and he and his son, Van, often roamed the Park's hills on horseback. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the City pastured its police and fire horses in the Park's open meadows, and photographs from that period often show riders on its trails. In the nineteen-teens, rodeos were organized at Griffith Park by the cowboys attracted to Hollywood by the nascent film industry. In the twenties and thirties, the Park emerged as a headquarters for social riding and equestrian parties hosted by the elite. This reached its height with The Breakfast Club. For a fifteen-year run beginning in 1924, the Breakfast Club brought together civic and corporate leaders, motion picture personalities and visiting dignitaries for weekly rides on the Park's trails.

Unlike the days of The Breakfast Club, Griffith Park riders are not necessarily wealthy or prominent but rather there are many people of various incomes enjoying their riding, day visitors who rent horses to connect with nature and history, and parents who introduce their children to horses at the Park's popular Pony Ride concession. The children of Los Angeles are also exposed to horsemanship through organized camp activities at Griffith Park. Throughout the summer and during holiday periods, the Griffith Park's boys' and girls' camps, Girl and Boy Scout troop camps, and privately operated children's camps from around the region conduct group rides on the Park's trails.

Currently, there are more than 2,000 horses living in and around the Park, stabled in facilities and backyards on the Park's edges. In addition to its resident equine population, hundreds of other horses are routinely transported to the Park for equestrian events and shows or trail riding.

The area northeast of the Park, near its Los Angeles Equestrian Center (LAEC), is an important hub of equine activity. Public rental stables, large commercial boarding stables, small boarding operations and backyard barns are located here, along with feed and tack stores, veterinarians, equine dentists and chiropractors, farriers, horse laundries, heavy equipment vendors and trainers of every kind. A significant number of horse owners reside in the LAEC- adjacent condominiums and in the Rancho tract, a community of homes zoned for horse-keeping. Southeast of the Park is Atwater Village, an historic horse-keeping neighborhood that is home to a half-dozen commercial boarding stables, some of which feature riding schools and training operations. Several of the facilities are notable for their youth programs. This is where Girl Scouts can earn their horsemanship badges, horse camps for kids are held, and Taking the Reins, a non-profit organization helping at-risk girls build self-esteem, is headquartered. Within the Park boundaries in the northwest of the Park is Sunset Ranch, a private facility. Established in the twenties to serve the Hollywoodland tract, its direct linkage to Griffith Park's trails was marketed as one of the neighborhood's chief selling assets. Today it is a public rental and boarding stable that has carved a unique niche for itself with its guided night-rides, round-trip tours of the Park that include a restaurant dinner.

#### **A. Bridle Trails**

Griffith Park is crisscrossed with 55 miles of bridle trails that equestrians share with hikers, runners, deer, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, hawks and owls, and, occasionally, an elusive bobcat or mountain lion.

#### **B. Martinez Arena**

Located near Travel Town in Griffith Park, Martinez Arena serves horse owners by providing users with a place to school and ride their horses. Created under the aegis of Park Ranger Abe Martinez in the early sixties, it is free to the individual user. The arena is also rented to organizations for horse shows, gymkhanas and other equestrian events for a nominal fee.

#### **C. North Atwater Equestrian Arena**

Atwater Village horse owners use the Park's North Atwater Equestrian Arena to turn out and train their horses. Critical to horsekeeping in that area this facility serves the public in ways similar to Martinez Arena.

#### **D. Pony Rides**

For a minimal charge, Griffith Park's popular Pony Ride concession introduces children to the thrill of the trot. Located on Crystal Springs Drive, it also offers wagon rides for children and their families and is near the Park's most heavily used picnic grounds.

## **E. Los Angeles Equestrian Center**

The Los Angeles Equestrian Center (LAEC) in Griffith Park is the region's leading equine facility. Annually, it hosts the Bill Pickett Rodeo, Los Angeles National Grand Prix, Memorial Day Classic and Pacific Coast Cutting Futurity. It also hosts numerous breed and discipline events, dressage, western, barrel races, show jumping, and driving competitions. Home to 500 horses, it offers outdoor rings, hot walkers, sun pens and other amenities for training and care of the horses. Additionally, the public can rent mounts from Griffith Park Horse Rentals or learn to ride at its Traditional Equitation School.

LAEC also hosts riding programs for non-profit organizations. Best known are the Ahead With Horses Therapeutic Riding Program for children at risk and the Interscholastic Equestrian League, which is composed of 60 middle and high schools. Annual events that welcome the public include the Tournament of Roses Equestfest permitting children to see and touch Rose Parade horses. The annual events also include the CALNET Special Olympics-style riding event and the Hollywood Charity Horse Show. The latter event donates the proceeds to non-profit organizations serving children.

## **V. RUNNERS**

Although hundreds of runners use Griffith Park every day and often thousands use it on weekends, runners are among the Park's most under-recognized user groups. Their needs are small and they typically recreate at off-peak hours, particularly in the early morning. The flat terrain in the Park's east and north offers the most attractive routes for most runners. For routine workouts, runners commonly follow north-south Crystal Springs Drive and transition to the Zoo parking on the east-west portion of Zoo Drive. To add distance, many cross into Burbank via Victory Boulevard or continue along Forest Lawn Drive, where they are relatively safe from traffic hazards. Because loop routes are most interesting, some runners use Griffith Park Drive combined with Zoo Drive and Crystal Springs Drive. This route adds hills but can be hazardous since it exposes runners to closely passing vehicles.

For runners who enjoy mountain trails, the Park has much to offer. Runners tend to have little environmental impact on trail beds, recognize the hazards of straying, including encounters with poison oak and rattlesnakes, and are seldom guilty of the trail-cutting and consequent erosion seen in the Park. Mt. Hollywood Trail and Tetrick Trail are two of the most popular trail-running routes.

### **A. Race-day Events**

While the Park is a magnet for individual runners, it periodically hosts organized events for large groups. For many decades, the Park has been the City's venue of choice for 5K and 10K road races, as well as other distances and relays. These are usually

headquartered in the Park Central area. These large events promote fitness and the sport of running, can benefit worthy causes, and draw positive publicity and new people to the Park.

## **B. Youth Running**

Griffith Park is an important resource for the Los Angeles Unified School District's team sport of cross-country running. The Park is one of three courses used by the District's eight leagues, yet it hosts almost half of the meets. These competitions, which occur weekly in the fall, typically draw 500 athletes from twenty-two high schools to a staging area on the picnic lawn north of the Greek Theatre in Vermont Canyon. From this starting point, runners follow a looping course through the south end of the Park. After the race, athletes return to the lawn for water and refreshments provided by coaches, parents and chaperons. For the past three decades on the last Saturday in September, the Bell-Jeff Cross-Country invitation meet, an all-day event, draws more than 1,000 participants from 75 schools throughout Southern California to this same staging area.

## **VI. BICYCLISTS**

Although bicyclists have always used Griffith Park's paved roads, over the past decade bicycle use has grown significantly as the Park has steadily increased and improved its bicycle lanes and routes. This has happened as a result of:

1. Specific capital improvements made in accordance with the Bicycle Element of the Department of Transportation's Master Plan, which promotes the expansion and upgrading of bicycle facilities in the City; and
2. As a consequence of a policy change undertaken for general Park safety that provided substantial new opportunities for safe and enjoyable cycling.

Per LAMC section 63.44 B16, no person shall drive or ride any cycle or vehicle, whether powered by a motor or human power, except on paths, roads or drives designed and provided for such purposes in public parks. There are now more than 26 miles of bikeways and bike routes within Griffith Park. Approximately 23 miles of them are auto-free. According to the most recent user study, cyclists now exceed the number of visitors who visit the Park to play golf or participate in sports, and are roughly equal to equestrian users.

In the mid-1990s, the decision to permanently close Griffith Park's paved mountain roads to motorized traffic opened up a new auto-free zone for recreational users in the Park's interior. Although hikers, not cyclists, took the lead in advocating for the closures of Mt. Hollywood Drive and Vista del Valle Drive to all but official and emergency vehicles, cyclists had an immediate benefit from the change. The action multiplied significantly the number of auto-free miles at cyclists' disposal. Wide enough to reduce the chance of collisions between bicyclists and pedestrians, these scenic, winding roads allow peaceful co-existence between users – and offer cyclists interaction with nature and inspiring views.

Cyclists of all ages and skill levels enjoy Griffith Park. They range from occasional riders who rent from its concessionaire to skilled riders who arrive on (or transport) their own equipment. Choosing from available routes, cyclists enjoy relatively flat and smooth rides suitable for family outings or long distance or race training, as well as steep and challenging rides for personal fitness or nature enjoyment.

## **VII. ACTIVE SPORT PARTICIPANTS**

In addition to the facilities of a Regional Park described in the General Plan for the City of Los Angeles as golf courses, campgrounds, wilderness areas, exceptional scenic features, and museums, Griffith Park contains facilities for active recreation usually found in neighborhood or community parks. It contains the municipal park system's highest number of golf courses (5), driving ranges (2), tennis courts (27), soccer fields (8 if used for adults, 16 if used for youth), an adult regulation baseball field (1 of 2 citywide), two walk-up softball/youth baseball fields, two walk-up volleyball courts, a basketball court, and the most popular municipal pool in the city. In addition to these facilities, archery, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and baseball are played at Griffith Park Boys Camp and both the Boys and Girls camps are equipped with pools. A 2003 survey of the Park's recreational users completed by the Department of Leisure Studies and Recreation at California State University, Northridge, found that five percent (5%) of respondents engaged in field and court sports, while three percent (3%) were golfers.

### **A. Golfers**

Griffith Park is considered the birthplace of municipal golf. The first city-owned public golf course in the nation was established in the Park in 1914. Although it was a primitive course with sand "greens," it met with success. Over the decades, more golf courses were developed in the Park and today, roughly nine percent (9%) of its area is devoted to the sport. More than 200,000 rounds of golf are played annually on its five courses. These include Wilson 18-hole course, Harding 18-hole course, Roosevelt 9-hole executive course, Los Feliz 9-hole 3 par course, and Tregnan Junior Golf Academy. Wilson-Harding amenities for golfers include a driving range, men's and women's clubhouses, a pro shop, golf lessons, cart rentals and a restaurant and a bar. Cafés serving beer and wine are located at Roosevelt and Los Feliz. Tregnan Academy features

a clubhouse and classroom along with a 3-hole teaching course and driving range where children can learn the principles of the game.

## **B. Field Sport Participants**

### **1. Soccer**

In 1992 the Recreation and Parks Department set aside 26 acres in Griffith Park to create the Ferraro Soccer Complex in recognition of the growing popularity of the sport. This is a grassy facility located near the Golden State-Ventura Freeway Interchange not far from the Autry National Center. The complex includes seven (7) fields, one (1) children's playground, restrooms and parking. Private adult and youth leagues are its primary users, but high schools also play and practice there. The fields are generally reserved in advance on a fee basis by permitted groups, but when not reserved are available to the public on a walk-up basis. In addition to the Ferraro Soccer Complex, soccer is played at the Griffith Park Recreation Center. Its recently refurbished synthetic turf field is available by permit or on a walk-up basis for adult games or two simultaneously played youth games. Spectator bleachers are located there and restrooms, parking and a children's play area are nearby.

### **2. Baseball**

Adjacent to the Crystal Springs Group Picnic Area in Griffith Park is Pote Field, one of only two regulation size baseball fields in the municipal park system. Pote Field is available by permit only and is used primarily by Los Angeles City College and the Municipal Baseball Program. Pote Field is also used by private high schools and other groups and for motion picture filming. Its amenities include a scoreboard, bleachers, restrooms, a children's play area and parking. In Griffith Park's North Atwater area is a free walk-up field that can be used for pony league baseball, t-ball and softball. Its amenities include bleachers, restrooms, a children's play area and parking. On the Park's northwest side, at Lake Hollywood Park, is a baseball area with a backstop that can be used on a walk-up basis for baseball and softball games. There is an additional baseball field at Griffith Park Boys Camp which is reserved for the use of children attending the Camp.

## **C. Court Sports Players**

### **1. Tennis**

Games are played, lessons are given daily, and tournaments are held at Griffith Park's twenty-seven (27) tennis courts. Griffith Park Recreation Center, located on the Park's southeastern side, features a facility with eleven (11) lighted courts (including a tournament court), all available to the public by paid reservation. The complex includes a Pro Shop where tennis lessons can be arranged. Restrooms, parking and a children's play area are located nearby. To the west, the Vermont Canyon tennis facility with twelve (12)

tennis courts is available to the public on a paid reservation basis. Tennis lessons can be arranged, and restrooms and parking are available at the site. In Griffith Park's Central area are four (4) free tennis courts open to the public on a free, walk-up basis.

## **2. Volleyball**

Griffith Park's volleyball/badminton courts in the Crystal Springs and North Atwater areas are available on a free walk-up basis to players who bring their own equipment. A volleyball court is also located at Griffith Park Boys Camp for the use of its children.

## **3. Basketball**

Griffith Park has a free walk-up basketball court in its North Atwater area as well as a basketball court for the use of the children at Griffith Park Boys Camp.

## **D. Swimmers**

The municipal plunge at the Griffith Park Recreation Center is the most visible pool in the City's park system, and is first in use in all classifications. In operation from the Saturday after Los Angeles Unified School District dismisses in the spring to Labor Day, it is open to children 18 and under free of charge and to adults for a nominal fee. In addition to group and individual swimming lessons, special programs offered by the facility include organized lap-swimming, aquacise, water polo, synchronized swimming, team diving and programs for seniors and the disabled. In addition to Griffith Park's public plunge, there are also pools at Hollywoodland Girls Camp and the Griffith Park Boys Camp for the use of the children attending the camps.

## **E. Campers**

Since the time they were established in 1926, Griffith Park's overnight camps have offered close-in, supervised camping to the children of Los Angeles. Griffith Park Boys Camp serves boys ages 6-17. Week-long resident camping is available in the summer months and during winter and spring holiday periods. Themed weekend camps are offered out of season, with sessions focused on sports, nature awareness, outdoor skills or mother/son and father/son bonding.

Camp Hollywoodland offers young girls resident camping in the summer months and during spring holidays, as well as special parent/child and family getaway weekends. The facilities feature cabins, dining and assembly rooms, pools and sport areas. When not being used by programs of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the facilities are available for rent to organizations and groups.

## **VIII. VISITORS TO MUSEUMS AND ATTRACTIONS**

### **A. Travel Town Transportation Museum and Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum**

Travel Town Transportation Museum is a free, family-friendly outdoor railway museum and recreational attraction that is enjoyed by approximately 350,000 visitors a year, including approximately 50,000 school children. In addition to its collection of historic locomotives, passenger cars and freight cars, Travel Town features a miniature train ride, picnicking amenities, a playground, a gift shop, and special birthday party/meeting cars available by special arrangement. Located adjacent to Travel Town is Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum. This is a demonstration railroad in miniature, offering the public free rides on scale-model steam trains, and public tours of the historic Walt Disney Barn.

### **B. Griffith Observatory**

Griffith Observatory has been an icon of public astronomy in Los Angeles since opening in 1935. Free to the public, the Observatory is one of the most popular informal educational facilities in the western United States and the most-visited public Observatory in the world hosting more than one million visitors each year. Fulfilling its mission of "Visitor as Observer," free public telescope viewing is available each evening when skies are clear and the Observatory is open. More people (7.5 million) have looked through the Observatory's Zeiss 12-inch refracting telescope than through any other on Earth. More than 14 million have seen a live program in the Observatory's Samuel Oschin Planetarium. The Observatory was renovated and expanded from 2002-2006, a project accomplished through a public-private partnership between the City and Friends Of The Observatory (FOTO).

### **C. The Greek Theatre**

The Greek Theatre, an historic 5,700-seat concert venue, is owned by the City of Los Angeles and is currently managed, operated and promoted by Nederlander-Greek, Inc. In addition to performances under the stars the venue operates multiple food and beverage concessions and has recently installed a number of box seats for table dining. Ticket prices vary by artist. Paid stacked parking is available on site for 2,800 to 3,000 cars.

### **D. Symphony in the Glen**

Since 1994, it is estimated that some 60,000 people have attended Symphony in the Glen concerts in Griffith Park which are held in cooperation with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. On average, young children are nearly a third of the audience. The professional 50-piece orchestra performs twilight concerts on various days throughout the summer. Parking is available at nearby lots, or concert-goers can shuttle to the location. A permanent outdoor stage, funded by Prop K Funds, to be used for future

concerts, is anticipated to be completed by Spring 2014.

#### **E. Greater Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens**

The Department of Recreation and Parks does not have any jurisdiction over the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens including the Zoo Parking Lot. The Zoo Department's vision, planning, and decision making process is independent of the Department of Recreation and Parks for the property operated by the Zoo Department.

The Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens opened in its current Griffith Park location on November 28, 1966. The Zoo is owned by the City of Los Angeles and operated, managed and controlled by the Zoo Department. The Zoo, accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, is home to more than 1,100 mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles representing more than 250 different species of which 29 are endangered. In addition, the Zoo's botanical collection comprises several planted gardens and over 800 different plant species with over 7,400 individual plants. The Zoo is open 364 days per year and receives over 1.5 million visitors per year.

#### **F. Autry National Center**

The Autry National Center, a privately operated museum, is located on 12.75 acres of Griffith Park land leased to the occupant by a City Council-created Board of Referred Powers in 1987. Annually, the Autry National Center welcomes approximately 180,000 paid visitors to its exhibits on the American West's history and culture, café, shop and theater. The Center also features special-event venues that can be rented for private parties, meetings and other special activities. Free parking for Autry visitors is available in its 297-space lot.

#### **G. Shakespeare in the Park**

Shakespeare in the Park is an annual summer festival performed by the Independent Shakespeare Co., a not-for-profit 50C-(3), that began performances in its current location within the Old Zoo area of Griffith Park in 2010. Performances in the 2013 season were viewed by nearly 43,000 people. The Shakespeare in the Park summer festival has grown to include more than Shakespeare performances. Audiences enjoy pre-show performances by a variety of local artists, the Salon Series (conversations about the intersection of Shakespeare and contemporary culture), and families can attend pre-show workshops about the plays. All of these summer events can be attended free of charge.

Currently the Independent Shakespeare Co. is working with the Department of Recreation and Parks on the construction of a permanent stage to host this annual festival. The stage is anticipated to be completed in 2014 and shall also be available for other performances throughout the year.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PLANT AND ANIMAL WORLD

#### I. INTRODUCTION

A major goal of this Vision is to maintain the natural wildlife environment in the Park consistent with an Urban Wilderness Identity. The natural beauty of the Park is apparent in its seasonal changes. After winter rains, seasonal streams appear in its canyons. In the spring, scores of native wildflowers come into bloom, and by April, mustard grows to shoulder height. With summer comes an apparent die-off: the Park's green hillsides turn gold, then fade to dun. In winter, the Park's native shrubs are laden with berries, and after new rains, the cycle begins again. The Park's fauna - its mammals, insects, amphibians, reptiles and birds - are adapted to and dependent on these cycles. Preservation and enhancement of the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity requires that the Park be managed to preserve and enhance its wild nature. In recognition of its vital importance Griffith Park is designated as a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) in the Los Angeles County General Plan. Changes or improvements to both the built and natural environment should be accomplished in a manner that is integrated functionally and aesthetically with the Urban Wilderness Identity, with particular care given to the identified Wilderness Area.

#### II. THE EXISTING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

##### A. Global Perspective

The Park is located in the easternmost part of the Santa Monica Mountain Range and enjoys a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and mild winters characterized by low amounts of rainfall. This type of climate is found in only four other areas of the world: covering in total a mere 2.2 percent of the earth's land surface area.<sup>5</sup> Yet, within these distinct ecosystems, scientists find twenty percent (20%) of all known plant species. Ecologists now have sounded the alarm that Mediterranean habitats are being lost at a rate exceeding that of tropical rain forests, with only one acre being protected for every eight acres being lost. California has taken the lead in the protection of its Mediterranean habitat, and scientists are encouraging other countries to conserve these ecosystems rather than lose them to development and agriculture.

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<sup>5</sup> Nature Conservancy, Conference on Mediterranean Habitats, Monterey, California, March 2007

## **B. The Park Setting**

The Park has two major watersheds divided by a single ridge traversing the Park from northwest to southeast, parallel to Vista Del Valle Drive. Elevations range from approximately 384 to 1,625 feet above mean sea level, with Mount Hollywood as the highest peak. The topography drops from the ridge, with steep and gentle slopes and canyons transitioning to flatter areas including the L.A. River flood plain on the north.

The northern watershed contains at least 20 smaller watersheds that collect and divert rainfall to canyon areas. Watersheds to the north have remained relatively undisturbed, with the exception of the base of the watershed near the Old Zoo, leading to Bee Rock, portions of Camp Road and the Toyon Canyon Landfill.

The southern watershed is also composed of ridges and canyons that create at least 20 smaller watersheds that collect and divert rainfall water to Vermont Canyon, the Bird Sanctuary, Fern Dell Road, Canyon Drive (which has the most significant riparian habitat in the Park) and areas to the west of Canyon Drive. With the exception of paved areas such as the Bird Sanctuary and Fern Dell Drive, which tend to accelerate water flow, the watersheds to the south are relatively unaltered. The construction of a channel for the Los Angeles River, the placement of the 134 Freeway and Interstate 5 at the Park's edges, and the buildings and facilities in the Park have, however, altered the Park's terrain.

Griffith Park has two distinct kinds of soil: the Tujunga-Soboba and the San Andreas-San Benito. The Tujunga-Soboba soil is very well drained, coarse, sandy loam, up to 60 inches deep, on alluvial fans with 0 to 5 percent slopes from sea level to 3,700 feet. This soil has a low runoff and erosion potential due to its quick absorption properties. This soil is of low natural fertility and typically supports grasses, forbs (herbaceous plants) and areas of brush. Tujunga-Soboba soil is found in the extreme northern portion of the Park along the Los Angeles River (flood plain), near the Headworks and the Los Angeles Zoo.

The San Andreas-San Benito soil is well-drained, sandy, clay loam up to 48 inches deep on steep slopes with grades from 30 to 75 percent between 200 to 1,500 feet in elevation. These deposits overlay sandstone or shale that is relatively fine-grained, but often excludes plant roots except in joints. This association has a moderate-to-high runoff and erosion potential because of the slope. These soils are of moderate-to-high natural fertility and typically support wildlife and vegetation. The San Andreas-San Benito soil is found in the Park wherever the soil is not Tujunga-Soboba.

### C. The Park Vegetation (Flora)<sup>6</sup>

Ten thousand to 20,000 years ago, following human occupation of the region, man-made fires caused chaparral to become the most widespread plant community in the Park and vicinity because chaparral readily regenerates after fires. Over the past 200 years, European and other non-native grasses were planted for livestock grazing. The introduction of these non-native grasses and weeds led to the ultimate disappearance of native grasses from the Park. Since the Park became City property, management of the vegetation has included planting other non-native species, including pine, eucalyptus, silk oak, lawns and golf course greens as well as horticultural shrubs and trees.

Areas of the Park are devoid of vegetation due to grading or other activities that have substantially modified the original topography and environment of the area. These areas include Toyon Canyon Landfill, Headworks, the composting facility and the various areas in the Park used for maintenance storage and work.

In the rest of the Park, there are at least eight different types of plant communities that have been identified and mapped. Each of these eight contains native Southern California and non-native species. The Park boasts rare native chaparral species such as Nevin's Barberry and showy natives such as matilija poppies and prickly pear. Nevin's Barberry was listed by the State of California as endangered in 1987 and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as endangered in 1998.

The Oak-Walnut Woodland areas, comprising coast live oaks and Southern California black walnut, are generally found on slopes and elevations above high-use areas and have not been substantially impacted by recreational activities. This plant community type is found in various locations in the Park, usually on north and east facing slopes.

Oak Woodlands are generally found on north-facing slopes surrounded by steep terrain. In these areas, coast live oaks mix with lower-lying toyon and California blackberry. Non-native invasive species, such as the California fan palm and the castor bean, sometimes grow in the Oak Woodland areas.

The Oak-Sycamore Riparian vegetation grows along creeks and moist areas in the lower elevations of the Park including Canyon Drive and Fern Dell Canyon, and smaller canyons such as those above the Merry-Go-Round and the Old Zoo. A mix of coast live oaks, western sycamores and Mexican elderberry trees is typical of this plant community. Non-native invasive species such as castor bean and giant reed can also be found. The Oak-Sycamore areas have been impacted by people and recreational uses.

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 2 hereto for an informative sampling of fauna found in the Fern Dell area.

The Santa Monica Mountains have no naturally occurring pine forests. The Pine areas of the Park are all comprised of trees that have been introduced. A variety of pine species is represented, but most large stands are Canary Island Pine. The largest pine areas are adjacent to the Greek Theatre and the Griffith Observatory. In most of these areas, the understory consists of the Mixed Chaparral plant community.

Mixed Chaparral is the most widespread plant community in the Park. It occurs in a nearly uniform canopy of chamise and toyon on north-facing slopes, yet is sparser on steeper slopes. On lower slopes, it is interspersed with non-native trees. Because of its dense canopy, except for official and non-official trails, the areas of Mixed Chaparral are relatively undisturbed by Park visitors and recreation. The Mixed Chaparral coexists with mixed scrub, ruderal and non-native landscaped communities, and occasionally supports non-native planted trees such as pine and silk oak.

Mixed Scrub is the second most widespread plant community in the Park, occurring in scattered patches. It is dominated by coastal sagebrush, California buckwheat, California encelia and white sage, and in some areas supports several non-native species, including short-pod mustard, wild oats and tree tobacco. Observation shows degradation to the quality of Mixed Shrub on the lower slopes in the southern portion of the Park.

The ruderal, or weedy plant community is found throughout the Park, both within patches of native plant communities and in areas that have been heavily disturbed by human use. It frequently borders ornamental landscape and mixed scrub communities. In the past, these areas likely supported grasslands, mixed scrub, mixed chaparral and riparian habitats. The weedy plant areas are typically dominated by non-native species such as short-pod mustard, Italian thistle, wild oats, tree tobacco, tocalote and annual sunflower.

Finally, Ornamental and Non-native Landscape areas occur within and near many of the high-use areas of the Park, including picnic areas, golf courses and roads. This broad category includes horticultural trees, shrubs and lawns. Some native trees exist, but many exotic trees, such as eucalyptus and redwoods, have been introduced.

All of these plant communities provide food and shelter for a diversity of wild creatures that make their dens, nests, burrows and hives in the Park.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 4 hereto.

## **D. Mammals, Insects, Amphibians, Reptiles and Birds (Fauna)<sup>8</sup>**

### **1. Mammals**

Mammals making their homes in the Park include deer, coyote, raccoon, red fox, grey fox, opossum, striped skunk, Beechy ground squirrel, various bat species and the non-native Eastern fox squirrel and house mouse. Bobcats have been observed in the northwest and eastern portions of the Park, and a mountain lion has incorporated Griffith Park into its range. In 2012, the mountain lion's incorporation of Griffith Park into its range was documented by the National Park Service, CA Fish and Game and the Griffith Park Natural History Survey. The lion was numbered and fitted with a radio collar and its movements in the Park are currently being tracked by wildlife biologists.

### **2. Insects**

The last survey of insects in the Park was in spring 2003, a year with a cool late spring and the atypical spring may have influenced the survey results. Nonetheless, according to that survey, the most frequently observed butterfly was the gulf fritillary, which uses ornamental passion vines as a host plant. Bumblebees and honeybees were the most abundant bee species, although carpenter bees were also observed. Sand wasps were observed along some of the hiking trails where sandy patches are present. Scorpions, tarantulas and other spiders were commonly observed.

### **3. Amphibians and Reptiles**

Amphibians in the Park include arboreal salamander, Pacific slender salamander, Pacific tree frog and California toad. Non-native amphibians found in many streams in the Park are the bullfrog and the African clawed frog. In addition to stream habitats the Los Angeles River, located on the Park's eastern side, provides abundant habitat for amphibians.

Reptiles identified in the Park include the western fence lizard, western skink, southern alligator lizard, California whiptail, side-blotched lizard, California legless lizard, California whipsnake, coachwhip, California kingsnake, ring-neck snake, gopher snake and western rattlesnake.

### **4. Birds**

Ornithologists have identified 166 bird species in the Park. The Park is also an important stopover for migrating birds and provides an abundant habitat for wintering birds. Resident birds during a 2003 survey included the acorn woodpecker, American crow,

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 1 hereto.

Anna's hummingbird, Bewick's wren, bushtit, California towhee, California quail, California thrasher, common raven, European starling (non-native), great horned owl and red-tailed hawk. Migratory birds included the ash-throated flycatcher, black-chinned hummingbird, black-headed grosbeak and western wood pewee. Aquatic species such as herons, egrets, ducks and migrating geese can be found in the Los Angeles River as it flows through the Park. These species are also observed on golf course water features within the Park.

### **5. Special Status Species**

Special status species are designated as such generally because of declining or limited population sizes resulting principally from loss of habitat. No wildlife species listed as threatened or endangered are known to exist in the Park, including butterflies and other insects. Other species known or suspected of being present in the Park have been designated California Species of Special Concern, including Cooper's hawk, loggerhead shrike, sharp-shinned hawk, southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, northern harrier, yellow warbler, San Diego horned lizard, south coast garter snake, San Diego desert woodrat and several bat species.

## **III. WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**

Wildlife corridors are patches of vegetation and topography that are bridges between suitable habitat for wildlife. Wildlife corridors are essential for maintaining genetic health and diversity for plants and animals. Without sufficient mix and diversity of genes within the population of a species, gene pools become limited and the species becomes genetically weak. If this occurs, that species may eventually disappear from that geographic area. Plant populations, as well as animals, benefit from genetic mixing through seeds carried by wildlife with wide-reaching ranges. Moreover, wildlife population imbalances, which inevitably occur in isolated ecosystems, can be remedied with the movement back and forth provided by wildlife corridors. Finally, wildlife corridors provide routes for avoiding the risk of road-kill and allow a safe means for escaping natural and man-made disasters, such as floods and fires.

In company with other reservoirs of native species surviving in Los Angeles County, such as the Santa Monica Mountains, Verdugo Mountains, San Gabriel Canyon and Joshua Tree Woodlands, the Educational Research Center of the University of California at Los Angeles has designated Griffith Park as a Significant Ecological Area (SEA). Griffith Park draws much of its importance as an SEA from its "greater than might be expected function" and role "as a corridor for any gene flow and species movement between the Santa Monica, San Gabriel, and Verdugo Mountains."

Roads (especially freeways), urbanized space and other man-made impediments create "genetic barriers." Griffith Park has become increasingly isolated from the rest of the Santa Monica Mountain Range, the Los Angeles River and the Los Angeles basin

because of the freeways, concrete river projects and urbanization that surround it. Perhaps it was for this reason that the ringtail cat, a mammal related to the raccoon, has now disappeared from the Park.

The City's recent acquisition of the 138-acre Cahuenga Peak property, adds to the existing wildlife corridor to the Santa Monica Mountains, linking the Los Angeles River to the Pacific Ocean.

Rivers can be wildlife corridors. River-bed vegetation is quickly returning to the Los Angeles River and should be encouraged to do so. Major bird and mammal populations exist on the re-vegetated portions of the River. Although some stretches of the River may not currently be suitable primary corridors, it is important to reinstate the Park's connection to the Los Angeles River for the future.

The undisturbed natural areas in the northwest portion of the Park should remain as such given that adjoining land outside the Park is also an undisturbed corridor providing primary linkage westward on the Santa Monica Mountain Range. Secondary environmental corridors within the Park are also essential and have been defined as concentrations of significant natural resources which connect primary natural corridors and facilitate movement of flora and fauna. Secondary corridors are often smaller in scale than primary corridors.

The Park should be free of fences and barriers limiting wildlife movement. Certain areas of the Park, such as Headworks, Toyon Canyon and the North Atwater Creek Stream have received some study to ensure that these areas provide for wildlife support and passage. To the extent possible, the periphery of the Park should allow for the unobstructed transition of wildlife to suitable habitats outside the Park.

#### **IV. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- A. Manage the Natural Habitat of the Park to Maintain, Rehabilitate and Restore Existing Ecosystems as appropriate throughout the Park
  - 1. Include in the full-time staff for the Park a properly educated, trained and experienced ecologist and a properly educated, trained and experienced forester/restoration specialist.
  - 2. Educate and train Park executives and staff about the Park's ecosystems as well as strategies to preserve and protect its biological resources.
  - 3. Identify existing native species within the Park and take steps necessary to preserve such native species, where appropriate.

4. Identify existing non-native species and develop a plan for possibly replacing such species with native species.
  5. Encourage use of native plant species and prohibit new use of invasive non-native species in the Park, including areas held by leaseholders and concessionaires.
  6. Identify unique biological resources for wildlife, and protect such areas as appropriate utilizing seasonal closures.
  7. Reduce to the extent feasible the number of areas of the Park used as temporary 'lay down areas' for equipment and supplies, and restore areas to their pre-existing state, per the permitting process.
  8. Minimize further development within the existing Wilderness Area of the Park, as defined by the Historic Cultural Monument Application as adopted by the City.
  9. Designate the Nevin's Barberry mitigation site that was established as a result of the taking of the plant during the Griffith Observatory Restoration Project, located approximately 2.5 miles north of the Observatory off of the Toyon Trail on a north-facing slope at an elevation of 1,000 feet, as a Rare Plant Preserve, as required by the Department of Fish and Game as a Mitigation Measure of the Restoration Project.
- B. Manage and Maintain Watersheds Within the Park to Support Aquatic Biodiversity and Riparian Habitat in the Park's Watercourses and the Los Angeles River
1. Reduce and prevent pollutant discharges into the environment.
  2. Break up areas of impermeable surfacing and replace with permeable surfaces to allow water infiltration.
  3. Develop a naturalized drainage system of bio-swales or riparian swales woven through the existing functions of the Park.
- C. Manage Rehabilitation of the Park Consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity
1. Restore Headworks in such a manner as to (1) improve the habitat linkage between the Park and the L.A. River, (2) restore a seasonal

wetlands area, (3) retain and treat surface water runoff within the watershed in a bio-swale and (4) improve the quality of water that enters the Los Angeles River.

2. Restore and maintain the Bird Sanctuary as a natural environment friendly to the Park's native bird species. Line and pave the stream course with natural materials and rocks so that water is captured and erosion is avoided. Install a small pumping system to ensure a continuous water source.
3. Restore and maintain Fern Dell consistent with its historic status and install a small pumping system to ensure a continuous water source.
4. Make changes and upgrades necessary to meet established standards, enabling the golf courses in the Park to apply for and receive Audubon International certification.
5. Work collaboratively with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Los Angeles County Flood Control to restore and maintain the Los Angeles River in Griffith Park as consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity and the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan.

D. Manage the Park Trails to Prevent Undesirable Impacts on Native Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat and Hillsides

1. Close and prohibit trails not established by the Department and enforce the prohibition.
2. Re-sign official trails and upgrade such trails as necessary to minimize erosion.
3. Regularly maintain official trails.

E. Acquire Additional Adjacent Open Space

1. Acquire open land bordering the Park.
2. Manage all newly acquired land consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.

F. Create, Restore and Maintain Wildlife Corridors

1. Restore a primary wildlife corridor between the Park and the Los

Angeles River in the area of the Headworks by removing fencing near the River and planting sycamores, oaks and native riparian shrubs. Culverts and land bridges should be considered for safe passage across Forest Lawn Drive as well as other vehicular roads of the Park.

2. Manage facilities within the Park so as not to impair natural secondary corridors.
3. Utilize the northwest area of the Park, including the recently acquired 138-acre Cahuenga Peak addition, as a wildlife area to encourage the corridor westward onto the Santa Monica Mountain Range.
4. Remove barriers, fencing and other impediments along the periphery of the Park to allow safe passage to outside natural areas unless those barriers provide protection from hazards or channel wildlife to other areas where safe passage is possible.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **BUILT FACILITIES**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Buildings and design elements, built at various times with diverse themes and styles, particularly along the edges of the Park that are adjacent to urban development, present a variety of architecture. Many were built under the aegis of the 1930s Works Project Administration (WPA). The Greek Theatre, the Griffith Observatory, the Old Zoo, and Fern Dell, as well as WPA elements such as the stone curbs, ornamental baseball field bollards and fences and posts, typify the distinctiveness and excellence of Griffith Park structures and have become part of the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity. However not all structures in the Park attain these high standards.

The Park contains several examples of ecologically unsound architectural decision-making. Architecture designed for inclusion within Griffith Park should address ecological issues including low-energy design, bioclimatic design, recycling and disposal of building materials and waste and ecological land-use planning. Architecture within the Park can and should respond to the need for a built environment which is well integrated into an unspoiled habitat and built for the enjoyment of nature in keeping with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.

Griffith Park's built facilities simultaneously serve the needs of its visitors and the native plant and animal inhabitants. The lives of many of its birds and mammals depend on the Los Angeles River. The banks and channels of this formerly natural river were channeled as a result of the floods of 1938, but the River is still accessible through wildlife corridors. In addition, the Park's golf courses have been heavily colonized, providing water and nesting sites for birds, forage for deer, and hunting grounds for coyotes and raccoons. The Park's picnic areas function as wildlife corridors.

Care and management of the Park must be conducted in a manner consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity. This requires that changes, improvements, replacements, or construction of new facilities at any location in the Park, including the edges of the Park, be accomplished in a manner that is integrated functionally and aesthetically with and with an ecologically sound approach.

It also means that there should be a careful calibration between actual use of the Park and the structures that are built on it. Non-essential buildings and structures could be eliminated leaving more open space for recreation and enjoyment. New structures should be added based on a data-driven need with care taken to reduce unnecessary redundancy. Finally, all structures should be aesthetically compatible with the Park's natural surroundings and wilderness character.

## **II. DEFINITION**

Built facilities are those man-made structures in the Park. These include physical buildings and developed recreational areas as well as permanently installed devices, such as roads and trails to move people around the Park.

## **III. INVENTORY**

Although there is currently no official inventory, it is estimated that there are more than 350 man-made structures in Griffith Park. These fall into roughly twelve categories, not including roads, bridges, parking lots and trails, which are discussed in the Mobility Chapter. These categories, which comprise everything from major visitor venues to sports fields, playgrounds, camps, cafés, maintenance buildings, developed picnic grounds and public restrooms, include more than one dozen destinations that consist of multiple buildings and built features.

### **A. Restrooms**

Restrooms are scattered throughout the Park. Many are currently not functional while others are subject to repeated damage. Some of the restrooms are located in accessible sites in the middle of the Park while others are located at sites not easily accessible to the public. There has not traditionally been a consistent design for these facilities. The Park currently lacks appropriately sited and designed restrooms of a type that can be easily maintained.

Before relocating or building new restrooms, a study should be conducted to determine the number of restroom facilities required to serve the public using the Park on a typical week-end, and the locations of greatest need and use. Existing and new restroom facilities must meet all accessibility standards, including cubicles, and restrooms should have passive solar hot water heating systems, as practicable, as these systems require no electricity and minimal maintenance. Restrooms should be located or remodeled as necessary to enhance the aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity. In making decisions as to the location of restrooms, consideration must be given to preserving and protecting mobility, views, landscapes, security needs and erosion control.

### **B. Meeting Rooms**

Within the Park, there are currently at least ten different venues with meeting room space. All of the existing meeting rooms, including the meeting room available at the Ranger Station, are on a fee-for-use basis. The location of existing meeting rooms includes:

- Two spaces at the Griffith Park Golf Clubhouse;

- Two railroad cars at Travel Town;
- A minimum of six different indoor and outdoor spaces at the Los Angeles Zoo;
- Classrooms, a theater and other spaces at the Autry National Center;
- A hospitality room at the Greek Theatre;
- Classrooms, a conference room and other spaces at the renovated Griffith Observatory;
- Approximately twelve meeting rooms of various capacities at the Equestrian Center; and
- Space and rooms at Friendship Auditorium, Griffith Park Camp, Camp Hollywoodland and the Ranger Station.

Given the existing stock there appears to be sufficient space to meet the current demand for meeting rooms within the park.

### **C. Visitor Centers and Ranger Headquarters**

Currently a Visitor Center and Ranger Station complex serves the public at Crystal Springs. A small auditorium and shaded outdoor area are a part of this complex. Additionally, in order to meet the need for timely response in that area of the Park, Recreation and Parks owns and maintains a resident caretaker facility inhabited by Park staff in the Fern Dell section of the Park.

The Los Feliz Adobe is an historical structure located in Crystal Springs that was an original Rancho Los Feliz home. The historical and cultural nature of the Los Feliz Adobe and the surrounding landscape could be rehabilitated in the Crystal Springs area. With the assistance of individuals trained and experienced in the public use of historic structures provision could be made for the Los Feliz Adobe to complement the recently improved Visitor Center. Landscaping should be restored to natural vegetation appropriate to the location.

Some employees of Recreation and Parks are currently located in Crystal Springs, either in the Los Feliz Adobe, its adjoining buildings, or modular structures across from Pote Field.

#### **D. Recreational and Cultural Structures**

In addition to the swimming pools (also called plunges) and built picnic areas that exist within the Park, there are currently seventeen recreational and cultural sites within the Park that range from one to many structures.<sup>9</sup> Of those seventeen sites, nine either have a Master Plan or leasehold arrangement unique to that particular facility. For example, while the Greek Theatre is not identified as having a separate Master Plan, improvements and changes to that recreational facility have historically been negotiated at the time of its leasehold renewal.

The existence of individual Master Plans for nine separate areas of the Park, areas that constitute substantial acreage within the Park, presents a challenge for developing a cohesive, uniform Griffith Park Master Plan. To ensure that work within the Park is consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity and that the needs of all recreational areas of the Park are identified and addressed, the Master Plan process must identify any conflicts or inconsistencies between the Master Plan and the individual venue master plans, and develop a mechanism for resolving those conflicts that is consistent with the aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity.

No existing statistically-valid analysis exists as to whether or not there is a need for additional or expanded recreational facilities or venues within the Park. There is also no existing study of whether or not there is a need for additional cultural structures within the Park. Griffith Park in its entirety has been designated as a Historic Cultural Monument with many features within the Park identified as character defining contributing elements. The existing facilities should be managed and maintained in such a manner as to enhance the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity and all improvements, changes, additions, or other structural changes, including signage, to any of the recreational facilities or venues, should be subject to the design elements of this Vision document. Due to the designation of Griffith Park as a Historic Cultural Monument, most alterations to existing structures will require review by the City's Office of Historic Resources. Recreation and Parks should avoid entering into any lease, or approving any individual facility Master Plan that would permit the leaseholder or facility to deviate from protecting and preserving the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park or negatively impact the natural environment of the Park as well as the mobility, views, wildlife corridors or landscaping of the Park.

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<sup>9</sup> Those structures include: Train Ride, Pony Rides, Tregnan Golf Academy, Los Feliz Golf Course, Merry-Go-Round, Wilson-Harding Golf Complex, Los Angeles Zoo, Autry National Center, Travel Town, Los Angeles Live Steamers, Los Angeles Equestrian Center, Martinez Arena, Griffith Park Boys Camp, Camp Hollywoodland, Greek Theatre, Roosevelt Golf Course and Griffith Observatory.

## **E. Developed Picnic Areas**

There are at least ten developed picnic areas within the Park. Any change of the existing picnic areas should be preceded by an analysis of the current usage of these existing facilities.

Picnic areas should be managed to protect the natural environment and natural open space quality of the area in which they are located and improve the aesthetic quality of the area. Where appropriate and feasible, invasive exotic plant materials should be removed from the areas and replaced with native plantings that can prevent erosion and provide maintainable landscaping. Where necessary, such as in Fern Dell, landscaping and historic features should be restored. Daily attention to the landscaping and grounds of built picnic areas is important for maintaining the Urban Wilderness Identity.

## **F. Plunges**

There are three plunges (swimming pools) within the Park: the Municipal Plunge at Los Feliz Boulevard and Riverside Drive, the pool at Griffith Park Boys Camp and the pool at Camp Hollywoodland. The pool at Los Feliz Boulevard is in operation from the Saturday after schools close in June until Labor Day. It is open to children 18 and under free of charge and to adults for a nominal fee. The Los Feliz Pool offers group and individual swimming lessons and various specialized programs such as aquacise and team diving, and programs for seniors and the disabled.

The pools at Camp Hollywoodland and Griffith Park Boys Camp are for the use of children attending the camps and are not open to the general public.

The Municipal Plunge at Los Feliz Boulevard is an historic structure built in 1927 that should be preserved. Consistent with retaining the historic buildings within the Park and its natural setting, the Municipal Plunge should be maintained in its current configuration.

## **G. Sports Fields and Courts**

As set forth in Chapter Two, The Human Dimension, there are a variety of sports fields within the Park. There is no current statistically-valid analysis of how often and when each field or court is in use, the number of people or teams unable to make reservations or obtain use of the existing fields and courts, or the need for more courts and fields within the Park. Such an analysis should be completed prior to moving, adding to or changing the number or location of existing fields and courts. Changes that are made to the facilities within the Park should be consistent with the findings and conclusion of such an analysis. Changes, additions, or relocation undertaken within the Park should be located in such a manner as to minimize intrusion on open space, views and wildlife corridors.

## **1. Field Sports**

### **a. Soccer**

In 1992, twenty-six (26) acres of the Park were set aside to create the Ferraro Soccer Complex located near the Golden State and Ventura Freeway Interchange. That complex provides seven (7) soccer fields, which are used primarily by private adult and youth leagues but also by high schools. The fields are reserved in advance on a fee basis by permitted groups, and when not reserved, are available on a walk-up basis.

The field at the Griffith Park Recreation Center was recently refurbished with synthetic turf. It is available by permit for adult games. The field also provides space for two youth games to be played simultaneously.

### **b. Baseball**

Pote Field is adjacent to the Crystal Springs Group Picnic Area. It is one of only two regulation-size baseball fields in the City's municipal park system. It is available by permit only and is currently used primarily by Los Angeles City College and the Municipal Baseball program. By the end of June, 2015, location to be determined, construction should be completed on the addition of two (2) junior size baseball fields to accommodate younger players.

In the North Atwater area of the Park, there is a free walk-up field that can be used for pony league baseball, t-ball and softball. At Lake Hollywood Park there is a baseball area with a backstop that can be used on a free, walk-up basis for baseball and softball games. The baseball field at Griffith Park Boys Camp is currently reserved for use by the children attending the Camp.

### **c. Golf**

The first city-owned public golf course was established in the Park in 1914. Over the years, golf became increasingly popular and now approximately nine percent (9%) of the Park acreage is devoted to golf courses. There are more than 200,000 rounds of golf played annually on the four courses now housed at Griffith Park.

The Wilson-Harding Complex includes a driving range and a pro shop. Lessons are available as are electric golf cart rentals. Tregnan Golf Academy has a 3-hole teaching course and a driving range, as well as a clubhouse and classroom for teaching children the principles of the game.

## **2. Court Sports**

### **a. Tennis**

There are twenty-seven tennis courts of which all, with the exception of the courts at Crystal Springs Drive, charge a fee for usage. The eleven lighted courts at the Griffith Park Recreation Center are available to the public by paid reservation. There are twelve courts at Vermont Canyon that are also available to the public on a paid reservation basis. There are four free tennis courts open to the public on a walk-up basis in the Park's Central area. Approximately six times a year, the Park hosts tennis tournaments that are coordinated by the City in conjunction with various tennis associations.

### **b. Volleyball**

There are volleyball/badminton courts in the Crystal Springs and North Atwater areas that are available on a free walk-up basis to players who bring their own equipment. There is also a volleyball court at Griffith Park Boys Camp for the use of the children attending the Camp.

### **c. Basketball**

There is a free walk-up basketball court in the North Atwater area as well as a court at Griffith Park Boys Camp for use by the children attending the Camp.

## **H. Restaurants and Food Concessions**

There are currently eleven locations in the Park with food and beverage service. As a general principle food facilities should be located so as to afford easy access and minimal impact to the Park environment. The number and location of all food service concessions, whether restaurants or mobile or permanent kiosks, should be determined by a comprehensive Park-wide analysis of user groups. All food facilities should be designed consistent with the aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity so that they blend into the natural and native environment of the Park.

## **I. Water Tanks**

There are currently seventeen water tanks in Griffith Park. Of those seventeen tanks, four are currently out of service. As part of the Griffith Park Water System Project, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is planning to abandon five existing tanks, rehabilitate two tanks and install two new tanks. At an earlier stage of the project, LADWP installed two new tanks, the Los Feliz Tank with a capacity of 750,000 gallons and Tank 111 with a capacity of 100,000 gallons. When LADWP completes the Griffith Park Water System Project, there will be ten operable tanks within the Park.

In March of 2006, construction began on the Travel Town Tank. That tank has a capacity of 750,000 gallons and provides domestic, irrigation and emergency water supply to the western areas of the Park, including Travel Town, the Composting Facility and the Los Angeles Zoo Animal Health Center. It also provides a source of water for higher elevations in the Park. In the planning stages is construction of an additional new tank with a 300,000-gallon capacity. This tank is currently referred to as the "1217 foot tank" and will provide domestic, irrigation and emergency supply to the central areas of the Park. The tank is also planned to provide a water source for higher elevations in the Park.

Careful coordination between Recreation and Parks and LADWP should take place with regard to the location selected for any new tanks constructed within the Park so that the location is consistent with preserving the natural character of the Urban Wilderness Identity and protects mobility, landscaping, wildlife corridors and views.

As DWP updates it's infrastructure RAP will work collaboration as removing abandoned water tanks would restore some areas of the Park in a manner that is consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity. A complete list of tanks is attached hereto as Appendix 5.

#### **J. Utilities**

Power and communication lines and poles are visible throughout the Park and negatively impact the Park environment, scenic views and vistas. To eradicate this negative impact all aboveground utilities should be placed underground. This should be a priority item and coordinated with the appropriate utility companies. There should also be an analysis conducted of alternative sources of energy that can be utilized within the Park in an environmentally appropriate manner.

#### **K. Commonwealth Nursery**

The Commonwealth Nursery is a structure that has been used for many years as a staging area for Department functions. The existing structures, that were once an active nursery but have not been utilized for that purpose for a great length of time, are currently in a state of disrepair and pose a safety hazard and thus have not been available to the general public.

In response to this hazardous condition, and to rehabilitate the area for a public use, the Department has designated Prop K funding in the amount of \$1.6 million dollars for infrastructure improvements to establish the abandoned site as the Griffith Park Nature Conservancy to be used as a center for conservation best practices, education and environmental sustainability. This shall be accomplished in keeping with the Urban Wilderness Identity of Griffith Park.

## **L. Miscellaneous Recreational Facilities**

Throughout the Park there are recreational facilities that do not easily fit into one of the previously identified categories. Included within such facilities are those that are listed below. Before making any changes or additions to a building or facility an analysis should be undertaken as to the need for such changes or additions. Such changes or additions should be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with preserving the Urban Wilderness Identity.

### **1. Griffith Park Dog Park**

This is an area of approximately 31,150 square feet in which dogs may run off-leash.

### **2. Martinez Arena**

This is an arena located near Travel Town that serves horseback riders of modest means to school and ride their horses. It is free to individual users and is also rented to organizations for horse shows and other equestrian events for a nominal fee.

### **3. North Atwater Equestrian Arena**

Located in the North Atwater area of the Park, this arena is used in a fashion similar to the Martinez Arena.

### **4. Playgrounds**

There are at least eight developed playgrounds in the Park, including the universally accessible "Shane's Inspiration."

### **5. Zoo Magnet School and Recreation Center Pre-school**

Both of these schools are housed in buildings on the grounds of the Park.

The Zoo Magnet Center, located in the far south parking lot of the Los Angeles Zoo, is a high school magnet program in partnership with North Hollywood High School and the Los Angeles Zoo. The Zoo Magnet Center offers 300 LAUSD students from across the City a college preparatory curriculum focused on animal studies and biological sciences.

### **6. Senior Center**

During the time this draft Vision was being written, Recreation and Parks moved three modular buildings to the Friendship Auditorium in order to create a Griffith Park Adult Community Center for the purpose of accommodating all seniors in the surrounding areas.

#### **IV. MAINTENANCE AND MAINTENANCE AREAS**

##### **A. Maintenance**

Preservation and maintenance of the Park's existing open spaces and facilities should be a high priority. When preservation and maintenance falter, landscaping, such as in Fern Dell, quickly disappears and may be replaced with invasive non-native plants and trees. Buildings take on an unused appearance and become targets for vandalism and further damage. Open spaces collect discarded trash and other debris. The Park generally takes on a worn look inconsistent with a vibrant and alive Urban Wilderness Identity.

All planning for the Park should include as a first priority the type and costs of maintenance required to keep the Park an alive and natural setting. Before constructing, adding to or changing facilities attention should be given to the maintenance costs involved in maintaining the facility and, given those costs relative to the costs of maintaining the existing system, whether or not the facility can reasonably be maintained in a manner that is appropriately integrated into a natural setting consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

##### **B. Maintenance Areas**

There are eight service yards and maintenance areas within the Park. In addition, on an as-needed basis, Park areas have become lay down areas for purposes of providing temporary storage of equipment and material for current or future projects.

These eight facilities take up approximately 53 acres of Park land. The locations for these facilities are related to what land was available at the time of their creation. The Central Service Yard on West Chevy Chase Drive comprises 31 acres and provides space and services for both Griffith Park and the Metro Region of Recreation and Parks as well as for other Departments of City government unrelated to Park activities. It also provides storage for five and ten yard dump trucks, Bob Cat tractors and other large equipment as well as storage for playground sand, rock and gravel for concrete, chain link fence and project-oriented building supplies.

In order to reduce the number of acres used for maintenance, services and storage, Park maintenance facilities could be consolidated. Such consolidation could provide for greater efficiency and provide additional recreational areas. Maintenance areas should be relocated out of view of Park visitors so that they do not detract from the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park.

### **C. Central Service Yard Opportunity Site**

The rediscovery of Central Service Yard (CSY) as dedicated parkland presents an extraordinary opportunity to expand both active and passive recreational enjoyment of Griffith Park without the prohibitively expensive purchase of new parkland and without displacing current users.

Through analysis of boundary maps and other records, the Real Estate Division of the Recreation and Parks Department determined in the Fall of 2006 that the approximately 28-acre riverfront parcel of land contiguous to the North Atwater Park section of Griffith Park is and always has been dedicated parkland. Additionally, 2012 saw the completion of the North Atwater Expansion Project which added approximately three acres of parkland to that location.

Today, the CSY parcel is not used for recreation and is inaccessible to park-goers. It is the site of a permanent building housing Recreation and Parks regional offices and several maintenance sheds and workshops serving the Recreation and Parks Department as well as other City departments. The site also has several portable buildings that function as offices for the recreation division, a large employee parking lot, fleet vehicle parking and storage areas, and other non-recreational uses.

By eliminating the non-park-specific functions currently in Central Service Yard, while at the same time consolidating its park-specific administrative and maintenance functions into a smaller, more economical footprint, a significant portion of the parkland can be reclaimed to serve both active and passive uses.

On the active side, given that the acreage is flat, surrounded by a residential family-oriented neighborhood, close to a regularly scheduled bus line and only a short walk from Chevy Chase Recreation Center, it provides an excellent opportunity for expansion to park users.

On the passive side, since it is contiguous to the Los Angeles River and the Atwater Creek Stream restoration in the North Atwater section of Griffith Park, its reclaimed riverfrontage can be converted to a picnic and wildlife viewing area that will complement the pedestrian/equestrian corridor currently along its bank.

All of these uses can be accomplished with sensitive planning that takes into account the needs of all users, including the existing Atwater horse-keeping community and the Recreation and Parks departmental functions that will remain at the site.

## **V. UPGRADES AND ADDITIONS**

Additions and upgrades should be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Vision and based on analyses of the need for such additions and upgrades. Upgrades and additions that are undertaken should be done in such a manner as to preserve and restore open space and wildlife habitat, protect wildlife corridors and to minimize the impact of public use and urbanization. Upgrades and additions should be designed in such a manner as to be consistent with the preservation of the Park's cultural and architectural history, and with preserving the undeveloped and natural aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity.

## **VI. DESIGN GUIDELINES**

With the recent designation of Griffith Park as a Historic Cultural Monument, changes to the contributing element built facilities within the park will also require review by the Office of Historic Resources. As to built facilities, the following elements should always be given consideration.

### **A. Infrastructure Design**

The natural Park character is typically defined with stone, stucco, and natural or colored concrete with muted colors. To preserve the natural and environmentally coherent aesthetic of the Park these are the preferred materials for infrastructure elements throughout the Park.

### **B. Sustainable Design Principles**

Sustainable design principles should be applied throughout the Park to all aspects of additions and restoration, repairs, and maintenance, including building orientation, design and materials, and site design issues such as planting and native plant restoration, habitat enhancement, storm water management and watershed connections to the Los Angeles River.

Consistent with sustainable design principles and the Urban Wilderness Identity, materials used should be low-maintenance, durable and vandal-resistant. Whenever possible, previously used and recycled materials should be used. Improvements should comply with the energy efficiency requirements found in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.

### **C. Accessibility**

All new structures and playgrounds are designed to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will therefore be designed to the fullest extent possible to be universally accessible as they are added or remodeled.

### **D. Furniture**

Furniture used within the Park should maintain a natural, outdoors character consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

### **E. Lighting**

Lighting throughout the Park should provide illumination while minimizing light pollution. Lighting fixtures should be consistent with the environmentally sensitive character of the Urban Wilderness Identity.

### **F. Wayfinding Signage and Graphics**

Earth tones and natural colors are recommended to create signage that is consistent with the natural character of the Urban Wilderness Identity. The signage should be simple and consistent throughout the Park.

## **VII. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- A. Recognize that Griffith Park Is a Unique Resource, consisting of approximately 25% of the acreage of the Los Angeles Municipal Park System
  - 1. Avoid using the identified Wilderness Area of Griffith Park as a location for facilities and recreational opportunities that could be more accessible to community use if situated in another location.
  - 2. Identify and maintain the unique recreational opportunities that exist in Griffith Park, such as extensive hiking and open picnic areas, Observatory, Zoo, Gene Autry Museum, Greek Theatre, etc.
- B. Involve Local Community in Facilities Development and Design
  - 1. Form a permanent Park Advisory Board to review and comment on proposed facility changes, modifications or additions.
  - 2. Ensure that design decisions in relevant areas are consistent with the

### Urban Wilderness Identity.

- C. Base Decision-Making with Regard to Built Facilities on Public Input and Current Needs Analyses
  - 1. Maintain a current and updated list of facilities available within the Park.
  - 2. Obtain validated information as to the need for proposed additions to the Park facilities before undertaking a project.
  - 3. Projects should not be permitted unless an analysis has been done as to their long-term impact on the natural character of the Park.
  - 4. Involve the Park Advisory Board in decision-making regarding expansions, destructions, or additions to Park facilities.
- D. Avoid Evicting or Displacing Established Park Users
  - 1. Maintain a current and updated list of established Park users and the facilities that they access within the Park.
  - 2. Ensure that no decision as to the addition, demolition or replacement of a facility results in an existing Park user no longer having access to necessary facilities.
- E. Manage the Built Environment of the Park in Such a Manner That Maintenance, Rehabilitation, Restoration and New Construction Maintain a Character Compatible with the Urban Wilderness Identity
  - 1. Develop an inventory of all the significant building materials within the Park that are consistent with the natural landscape.
  - 2. Prepare a list of preferred materials, finishes, colors, etc., that are consistent with the natural aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity.
  - 3. Develop a master restroom plan for the Park with standard design elements that are consistent with preservation of the Park's natural aesthetic and are universally accessible.
  - 4. Identify water tanks to be removed or to remain. Develop a plan for an adaptive reuse or painting of specific tanks that blends in with the natural character of the Park.

5. Develop a furniture palette with specifications for each type of furniture consistent with the natural character of the Park as well as criteria for use and maintenance.
  6. Develop a light fixture palette that minimizes light pollution and is consistent with the natural aesthetic of the Park to be implemented as repairs and replacements are needed.
  7. Develop and implement a graphic identity and signage program throughout the Park that utilizes earth-tones and is consistent with the natural aesthetic and non-urban aspects of the Park.
- F. Maximize Effective and Efficient Use of Existing Facilities Before Replacing or Adding to Those Facilities.
1. Ensure that all existing facilities, including those held by leaseholders, are being effectively and efficiently used prior to adding new facilities.
- G. Emphasize Free Rather than Fee-Based Facilities and Activities
1. Promote free use and enjoyment of the Park.
  2. Avoid privatization of Park facilities.
- H. Avoid Infringing upon Natural Areas
1. Preserve native species.
  2. Promote and preserve native landscaping.
  3. Preserve the identified Wilderness Area.
  4. Avoid adding to the footprints of existing facilities.
  5. Preserve wildlife corridors.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **MOBILITY**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Automobiles, buses, service and safety vehicles, cyclists, runners, commuters, horseback riders and hikers all make use of trails and roadways in Griffith Park. All enter from, and exit back into, Los Angeles and surrounding cities. The goal of this Chapter is to make consistent the use of the Park's roads and trails to its Urban Wilderness Identity, preserving and strengthening the distinction between the Park's wilderness and the surrounding urban environment.

This chapter discusses why priority should be given to the promotion of bus, light rail, subway, and other alternative forms of transportation to and from the Park, and supports the development of a shuttle system to take visitors to the Park's most popular facilities and major attractions.

This chapter builds from a premise that access and transportation should help differentiate Griffith Park from its environs.

For example, the Vision emphasizes moderating speed and discouraging through-driving in the Park. The Vision, accordingly, opts for the least polluting, most energy-efficient, and quietest transportation – shuttle buses for example – to establish linkages connecting major Park centers, and thereby reducing visitor's dependence on automobiles. In the City, buses, bus shelters and benches often act as advertising mediums, but in the Park, buses, shuttles and their attendant street furniture should abstain from commercialization. Whereas the use of impermeable parking lot surfaces may be preferable when the goal is to send runoff to storm drains, with drought and climate change, permeable surfaces to recharge the water table are recommended in a park setting and are better attuned to the Park's natural setting and identity.

#### **II. MOTORIZED VEHICLE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION**

##### **A. Definitions**

For purposes of this chapter, the term "motorized vehicle" is defined to include automobiles, buses, and service and safety vehicles.

## **B. Park Gateways**

Motorized vehicles enter Griffith Park through four primary gateways and four secondary gateways.

### **Primary Gateways:**

- Los Feliz Boulevard/Riverside Drive
- Crystal Springs/Griffith Park Drive
- North Zoo Drive
- Forest Lawn Drive

### **Secondary Gateways:**

- Vermont Canyon
- Western Canyon (Fern Dell)
- Victory Boulevard
- Bronson Canyon

Visitors can enter the Park on public transportation through Metro Route 96, which includes stops within the Park at the Pony and Train rides, Park Center, and the L.A. Zoo. There is currently no public transportation into the Park in the north and northwest portions of the Park where Travel Town, L.A. Live Steamers, Martinez Arena, Mineral Wells, Headworks and the north picnicking areas are found.

Currently Commonwealth Avenue is not utilized as a motorized vehicle gateway into the Park. It is, however, used as an access point for the Commonwealth Service Yard and the adjacent nursery; as a controlled entrance and exit for Greek Theatre events; and, as a designated emergency access route into the Park for public safety personnel.

## **Recommendations**

- Motorized Vehicle Gateways should distinguish the Park from its urban environment.
- Consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity, any gateway structures should be modest in scale, with minimal surrounding hardscape.
- If kiosks with interpretative panels are used, they should be cleaned and maintained on a regular basis.
- Any reconfiguration of Park Gateways should include the prioritization of an entrance to the Park from Interstate 5 (southbound) as the lack of an exit from Interstate 5 (southbound), serving the northeast corner of the Park, likely increases traffic on both Los Feliz Boulevard and Griffith Park Drive.

## **C. Park Roads**

There are approximately thirty-eight (38) miles of paved roads in the Park. While most of the Park's roadway system is open to the public, some roads are closed to private

motorized vehicles and/or are limited to park maintenance or public safety personnel use only.

## 1. Major Roads

There are four major roads in and through the Park:

(1) Griffith Park Drive, which enters the Park at Los Feliz Boulevard and Riverside Drive. It passes the pony and train rides and the Ranger Headquarters and Los Feliz Adobe before turning left at its junction with Crystal Springs Drive and continuing through the Park past Mineral Wells Picnic Area to Travel Town and a junction with Zoo Drive.

(2) Zoo Drive, which enters the Park at Victory Boulevard and Riverside Drive. It continues around the perimeter of the Park until it becomes the Western Heritage Way in front of the Autry National Center and then Crystal Springs Drive beyond the Autry National Center.

(3) Vermont Canyon Road, which enters the Park at the end of Vermont Avenue. It continues through the Park past the Greek Theatre until it comes to the tunnel where it branches into West Observatory Road and East Observatory Road.

(4) Fern Dell Drive, which enters the Park at Western Avenue and Los Feliz Boulevard. It continues into the Park until it ends at the junction with Western Canyon Road. Western Canyon Road proceeds from that junction to the Observatory.

## Recommendations

- The existing roadway system should be appropriately managed in a manner that supports the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.
- The Crystal Springs Corridor should be managed and maintained in a manner that utilizes traffic calming measures and greenery in a way that discourages speeding and commuters.

## 2. Closed Roads

There are two major paved roads in the Park that are closed to private motor vehicles:

(1) Mount Hollywood Drive, which is closed to motorized traffic just beyond the Observatory tunnel area.

(2) Vista del Valle Drive, which is closed at Commonwealth Canyon Drive.

Both Mount Hollywood and Vista del Valle Drives wind into the Park's central core, where

they ultimately connect with each other and to Griffith Park Drive, which is the Park's through road for motorized vehicles. These roads were closed to private motor vehicle traffic in the mid-1990s.

In addition to Mount Hollywood and Vista Del Valle Drives, the loop road connecting the Old Zoo entrance from Griffith Park Drive and the Merry-Go-Round parking lot is currently closed.

### **Recommendations**

- Mount Hollywood and Vista Del Valle Drives should remain closed to private motorized vehicles as pedestrians, equestrians and bicyclists have benefited from the closure of these roads and the resultant increase in the number of auto-free routes available to Park visitors.
- Consideration should be given to upgrading the Merry-Go-Round loop road connection so that it might provide a temporary alternative route for traffic within the Park when major special events preclude access to and from Griffith Park Drive.

### **3. Road Maintenance**

Maintenance of the roadway system, including its curbing and immediately adjacent greenery, is a priority. Surviving examples of Civilian Conservation Corps craftsmanship in curbs, culverts and retaining walls are worth preserving and can set a stylistic tone for new construction.

#### **D. Motorized Vehicle Access and Circulation**

Through Motor Vehicle traffic uses the Zoo Drive/Crystal Springs/Griffith Park Drive corridor as an alternative to California State Route 134 and Interstate 5 during the morning and evening commute periods.

Commuters often travel at speeds well in excess of the posted 25-mile per hour speed limit which presents a safety hazard for Park visitors who share and cross the Zoo Drive/Crystal Springs/Griffith Park Drive corridor and is disrupting to the tranquility of the Park. Cyclists, equestrians, hikers, runners, picnickers, and other users of play areas adjacent to park roadways, including golf cart passengers and wildlife, are vulnerable to this automobile traffic and are placed at risk.

Measures are necessary to minimize the use of Park roads as an alternative route for commuters. Consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park, innovative thinking and planning are necessary to design systems that will control and slow this traffic.

Monitored and controlled speed limits, forced stops at frequent intervals and other traffic calming methods may become necessary.

## **Recommendations**

- The curb systems should be upgraded and replaced where necessary in a manner that is consistent with the rustic nature of the Park and with the Park's Historical Cultural Monument (HCM) designation.
- The greenery at the edges of the roads should be carefully designed and maintained to emphasize that the road is in a Park and, at the same time, help influence and calm traffic.
- With the exception of the loop road between the Old Zoo and Griffith Park Drive, the interior paved roads of the Park that are currently closed should be maintained in a manner that encourages usage by pedestrians, runners, equestrians and cyclists.

### **E. Public Transit Access and Circulation**

The City of Los Angeles promotes the use of public transportation as one alternative to the use of private motorized vehicles. Visitors can enter the Park on public transportation through Metro Bus Route 96, which includes stops within the Park at the Pony and Train rides, Park Center, and the L.A. Zoo. There is currently no public transportation into the north and northwest portions of the Park where Travel Town, L.A. Live Steamers, Martinez Arena, Mineral Wells, Headworks and the north picnicking areas are found.

The City provides DASH local bus service on week-ends linking the Observatory and the subway station at Vermont and Sunset. On its way to the Observatory, the DASH bus will also pick up walkers who are leaving Vermont Canyon for the Observatory. This DASH service represents an important beginning to providing extended public transit for visitors to the Park.

Metro Bus and DASH Bus Routes currently servicing the park include Metro Bus Routes 180/181 and 780 which service the Park's Los Feliz Boulevard/Riverside Drive Gateway.

Metro Bus Route 96, which is the only bus line entering the Park and it does not do so after 7:00 p.m. It enters and exits the park at Los Feliz Boulevard and Riverside Drive, makes three stops along the Park's eastern corridor, and enters and exits the Park at Victory Boulevard traveling toward Alameda Avenue and the City of Burbank.

Throughout the Park similar linkages should be explored. In the long term, a desirable way to enable visitors to access the Park would be by a subway stop located near the Zoo and the Autry. Such a stop would permit users to access the Park while simultaneously reducing traffic on surrounding streets.

As these new modes of transportation are implemented an in-Park shuttle system could be phased in to move visitors to the Park's most popular facilities and major venues. The first routes established could travel the Griffith Park Drive/Crystal Springs/Zoo Drive

corridor, making intermediate stops at popular areas and a Vermont Canyon/Western Canyon loop route delivering visitors to the Observatory/Mount Hollywood trail area and Fern Dell.

### **Recommendations**

- Additional, high-frequency, Metro Bus and DASH Bus routes should be established to bring visitors to the Park.
- Existing DASH Bus lines serving the greater Los Feliz area should be extended to bring visitors to the Vermont Canyon and Western Canyon areas of the Park.
- New DASH connections should be established to link the Park to the Metro Red Line subway stops at Vermont/Sunset and Hollywood Western.
- In the long term, a desirable way to enable visitors to access the Park would be by a subway stop located near the Zoo and the Autry. Such a stop would permit users to access the Park and simultaneously reduce traffic on surrounding streets as well as greenhouse gas emissions.
- A park shuttle system should be developed.

Such a shuttle system should be either free or at minimal cost to users, fully accessible, environmentally responsible and otherwise consistent with the Park's identity as an Urban Wilderness. Features such as overhead windows to facilitate views of the Park would enhance the visitors' pleasure and support the Urban Wilderness experience. Gear storage areas and exterior bicycle racks should also be available for those using the shuttle system.

### **F. Parking**

According to counts provided by Myer Mohaddes and Associates Transportation Planners, and there are approximately 10,000 spaces for car parking within the Park. Approximately seventy percent (70%) of them are in dedicated surface lots, twenty percent (20%) are curbside parking areas, and ten percent (10%) are temporary spaces at special event venues such as the Greek Theatre.

To the extent there are any parking shortages, they are likely limited to specific Park locations or are the result of isolated special events. In keeping with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity, such parking shortages could be alleviated through a park-and-ride shuttle system utilizing contingency parking areas.

## **1. Parking Lots**

Priority should be given to resurfacing the Park's existing asphalt and concrete lots with environmentally responsible, water-permeable materials that will reduce the "heat island" effect and enhance the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity. These improvements not only promote water capture but they also increase the Park's canopy by planting additional trees.

Such an effort was recently completed at the Greater Los Angeles Zoo which is pioneering environmentally responsible improvements through its departmental Parking Lot Master Plan. The identical principles are being applied elsewhere in the Park including at a parking lot installed as part of the North Atwater Creek Stream Restoration project located adjacent to Central Service Yard and North Atwater Park across the River in Griffith Park. The design for its parking area features a water-permeable surface that promotes water capture and is shaded by trees.

Striping on many of the Park's existing lots is faded or nonexistent, thereby decreasing the carrying capacity of the available lots. In addition to resurfacing these lots with environmentally responsible materials the lots should be re-striped to promote the most effective use of the available space.

## **2. Parking Structures**

No parking structures currently exist in the Park and, at this time, there is no identified need for new parking structures in the Park. Furthermore parking structures are inconsistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity and the increased automobile traffic that inevitably occurs in proximity to such structures materially damages the park-like nature of the picnic areas and recreational facilities that are adjacent to the lots.

If, in the future, the need arises for parking structures, those parking structures should be located immediately outside the boundaries of the Park with a fully developed park and ride shuttle system available to transport Park users into and round the Park.

The Department should also seek reciprocal parking arrangements with surrounding publicly and privately owned structures and lots. Candidates for supplementary park-and-shuttle programs could include the municipal parking structure at Highland and Hollywood and any municipal parking structure located within a reasonable distance such as the City owned parking lot located behind Providence High School in Burbank.

## **3. Special Event and Seasonal Parking**

Special events, such as organized relays and walks benefiting major charities, are often held in Griffith Park. Ample parking exists within the Park for these early-morning events which generally conclude by late morning. These events often arrange for overflow

parking with free shuttle service to the Park at the Costco complex on Los Feliz Boulevard.

In recent years, members of the Los Feliz and Griffith Park community participated in a Greek Theatre Task Force that recommended a park-and-shuttle system be established in the Los Angeles Zoo parking lot. Such a system could permit concert-goers to take advantage of I-5 and 134 freeway ramps feeding into the Park and help alleviate traffic congestion on Los Feliz Boulevard and nearby streets before and after concerts. This is not a concept new to patrons of outdoor venues in Los Angeles; for example, during the Hollywood Bowl concert season, Hollywood Bowl patrons take advantage of park-and-ride shuttles located in the Los Angeles Zoo parking lot.

### **Recommendations**

- As it has for more than 110 years, parking should remain free in Griffith Park.
- Existing parking should be managed and maintained in an environmentally sound manner.
- Existing parking lots should be resurfaced with environmentally responsible materials.
- Existing parking lots should be restriped and the striping maintained.
- No new parking structures should be introduced within the boundaries of the park.

## **III. NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS AND CIRCULATION**

### **A. Definitions**

For purposes of this section, the term "non-motorized" is defined to include runners, hikers, walkers, cyclists and equestrians.

Consistent with Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 63.44 B16, which governs the use of wheeled vehicles in City parks, in this Chapter "cyclists" includes all wheeled vehicles. Nothing in this Vision document proposes to change the terms of the City Ordinance and, to the contrary, the provisions of the existing Code, prohibiting cycles and vehicles, whether powered by a motor or human power, from being driven on anything other than a path, road or drive designated for that purpose, should continue to be maintained.

### **B. Entrances and Exits**

In addition to gateways that serve motorized users there are a number of points of ingress and egress that are used solely by non-motorized visitors to the Park. Many hikers, walkers, runners and others who use the Park on a regular basis enter it on foot from access points on all sides. Others arrive by public transit and choose from various stops that place them near Park boundaries in close proximity to its roads and trail heads.

Examples of non-motorized Park entrances include the bridge and tunnel system that carries equestrians over and under the L.A. River and I-5 Freeway directly to the Park's trails and the Crystal Springs Bikeway, Northern Bike Route and Los Angeles River Bikeway that funnel cyclists into the Park. Less obvious are the numerous pedestrian routes that enter the Park from surrounding residential areas.

### **Recommendations**

- An accurate visitor brochure should be produced with a plan of the Park's trails, roads and facilities. The brochure should be available to visitors at the Crystal Springs Drive Visitors Center and the Park's major attractions. It should be provided in at least Spanish and English, and provision should be made for individuals who are blind to receive an appropriately modified version.

### **C. Pedestrian and Equestrian Trails**

There are approximately fifty-three (53) miles of pedestrian and equestrian trails and roads in the Park.

The Park's pedestrian and equestrian trails are shared and enjoyed by a substantial volume of walkers and pedestrians. The reasons why people value the trails differ. They are variously seen as a respite from the urban milieu, a venue for family and social interaction, a component in a personal fitness program, a place for native plant and wildlife viewing, and, on specially permitted occasions (e.g. the Los Angeles Unified School District cross-country meets), and as a site where athletic competitions can be staged.

#### **1. Trail heads**

There are currently no formally identified "trail heads" within the Park. While frequent trail users have come to recognize areas (e.g. the Merry-Go-Round parking lot) as a meeting place to begin a hike, no official signage exists to provide information about the trails leading off from certain locations.

#### **2. Trail Maintenance Upkeep and Improvements**

Both preservation and continued enjoyment of the Park's trails require that they be sensitively maintained by staff and respected by their users. If they are not then the resultant dust bowl effect and the loss of flora and habitat will materially diminish the experience for all Park users.

Landslides and erosion are the trail system's two biggest enemies. Machine-operators tend to widen trails in the aftermath of geological events, and trails erode from frequent use. An educational program should be initiated to discourage both inadvertent trail widening by maintenance staff and trail shortcutting by Park users.

### **3. Opportunities for Trail Linkages**

Passed by the California Legislature in 1989, AB 1516 was drafted in order to link the City's trails, thereby extending their recreational value. Its intended result, the Rim of the Valley Trail, is part of California's State Recreational Trails Master plans. The Rim of the Valley Trail will connect riding and hiking trails throughout Greater Los Angeles. Upon completion, it will link trails in the City and Valley – including Griffith Park trails – creating a unified recreational corridor. Every effort should be made by the Department of Recreation and Parks to cooperate with, and advance, this effort.

#### **Recommendations**

- Manage and maintain the existing trails and roads utilized by non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians in a manner that preserves the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.
- Consider the impact on trail users' access, safety and tranquility prior to undertaking Park trail and road repairs and improvements.
- Develop a formal trail head identification system for major trails, including information as to the grade of the trail in the steeper areas and whether the trail is open and suitable to both pedestrians and equestrians. Such a system could help public safety personnel in locating individuals who might be lost or otherwise unable to locate themselves within the Park.
- For user information and back-country safety, publish an accurate trail map coded to a discreet signage and mileage-marker system, obtainable at the Park Ranger Station.
- Enforce all safety rules and regulations, such as the City's ordinances banning wheels on trails, running of horses, smoking and disturbing the peace.
- To promote a safe and positive experience, staff the Park with resident Park Rangers who are knowledgeable about the Park's trail system and focused on the security and quality-of-life issues that may arise in a regional park.
- Any Griffith Park trail system or interpretive smart-phone app that utilizes the Recreation and Park logo, or purports the support thereof, should be cooperatively reviewed by the Department of Recreation and Parks prior to its release.

#### **D. Bicycle Routes and Lanes**

There are more than 26 miles of bikeways and bike routes in Griffith Park. Approximately 23 of those 26 miles are auto-free.

Capital improvements undertaken specifically for cyclists in recent years include two

perimeter bikeways, the Crystal Springs Bikeway and the Northern Bike Route. There is also a striped and signed bicycle lane extending from just north of the Park's Los Feliz Boulevard entrance to Travel Town. In addition, the Los Angeles River Bikeway is a dedicated bike-only route entering the Park south of Los Feliz Boulevard via the Alex Baum elevated bicycle bridge and extends the length of the Park. At various points throughout the Park, cyclists can go from one route to another.

#### **E. Roads**

The decision made in the mid-1990s to permanently close Mount Hollywood Drive and Vista Del Valle Drive to motorized traffic opened up a new automobile-free zone for bicyclists in the Park's interior. These paved roads are now used harmoniously by all of the Park's non-motorized users: walkers, runners, horseback riders and cyclists.

### **IV. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- A. Acknowledge the need to make all decisions regarding mobility in the Park in a manner consistent with protecting the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park.
  - 1. All mobility solutions should support the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity by emphasizing the difference between the Park and its urban surroundings.
  - 2. Consistent with the City's planning for higher density and decreased use of the individual automobile, priority should be given to accessing the Park by means other than by private automobile.
  - 3. Public transit agencies should be encouraged to increase the routes going to the Park and provide transportation within the Park.
- B. Ingress and egress to the Park should support the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park
  - 1. Entrances to the Park should emphasize the distinction between the urban milieu and the Park experience.
  - 2. Informational signage consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity should be available at the entrances to the Park.
  - 3. At this time there is no clearly identified need for Park entrance kiosks.

C. Interior Motorized Vehicle Circulation by Environmentally Responsible Shuttle Systems

1. Any transportation system introduced into the Park to move visitors around the Park should emphasize environmentally sound shuttle systems.
2. At this time, there is no clearly identified need for new recreational rides, such as railroads, aerial tramways or funiculars.

D. Maintain the Park Trails, Roads and Entrances in a Safe Manner for all Park Users

1. Maintain and manage closed mountain roads in a manner consistent with the needs of all current Park users. Continue to clear rockslides and fill potholes that occur after heavy rains and ensure that drivers of permitted vehicles, i.e. film location trucks and vans, proceed with caution and abide by the speed limit.
2. Discontinue any maintenance practices for trails and roads that create hazardous surfaces, such as the deep, parallel lines cut with a harrow.
3. Halt the hazardous deterioration of the woodcrete fencing along bridle trails and, wherever necessary, the woodcrete replaced and repaired and added to as appropriate.
4. Regularly remove rocks on bridle trails that present hazards for trail users.
5. Improve the drainage in the tunnel under the I-5 access road just north of the Autry so that it can be used without fear of standing water and other debris.

E. Manage the Park Trails, Roads and Entrances in a Safe Manner for all Park Users. Cooperate with the Citywide Rim of the Valley Trail Initiative and Develop Linkages that will Connect Griffith Park's Trails to Others in the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles Basin

1. Officially designate the "Zoo Drive Equestrian Staging Area" and provide an area for horse trailer parking, tie rails and a small holding corral.
2. Establish "safe running routes" for runners that are looping or partially

looping and have safe transitional easements at intersections, as well as signage and mile markers to encourage the use of the routes.

3. Provide protection for runners in bike lanes and carefully mark the bike lanes, particularly at intersections.
4. On cross-country meet days for local high schools, arrange for Greek Theatre restrooms to be available to students before and after races.
5. Preserve the grassy picnic area north of the Greek Theatre in Vermont Canyon as an assembly area for LAUSD high school cross-country running meets.
6. Bring bikeway gates and transitions into conformity with Department of Transportation standards and improve the overall maintenance and weed abatement programs.
7. Create a better exit and entry solution for cyclists at Victory Boulevard.
8. Provide bicycle racks in appropriate Park locations, with maps available as to the Park's approved bicycle routes.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### PARK MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The Urban Wilderness Identity is the 21<sup>st</sup> century manifestation of Colonel Griffith's vision for Griffith Park. The Colonel foresaw the day when Los Angeles would be a congested metropolis and his gift of open space would be a valuable resource. This resource requires effective management of the many natural resources and the complex mix of recreational uses surrounded on all sides by a dense urban environment.

The current administrative structure for Griffith Park is an outgrowth of both adopted law, including the Charter for the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles City Administrative Code, and decisions made by the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners with regard to the internal structure of the Department of Recreation and Parks. This administrative structure is consistent with how all parks are managed within the City. The size and the large variety of recreational opportunities cause Griffith Park to have a heightened awareness and consideration in which it is managed. A brief review of the Department's current organizational structure and legal basis for the current structure provides insight into the manner in which the Park's resources and decisions about the use of those resources are currently managed.

The Department of Recreation and Parks is created by Article I, Section 500 and governed by Article V, Section 590 *et. seq.* of the Charter of the City of Los Angeles. Section 590 provides that the Department is to establish, construct, maintain, operate and control, wherever located, all parks in the City of Los Angeles as well as all recreational facilities. As part of that authority, the Department has the authority to establish schedules for charges for special services.

The Charter further provides for a five-person Board of Commissioners which is appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council. The Board meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. except for the months of July, August and December. In those three months, the Board meets only once a month on the second Wednesday of the month. The Board of Commissioners has the authority, pursuant to Section 591 of the Charter of the City of Los Angeles, to organize the work of the Department into divisions and to appoint an administrative officer for each division or for any group of divisions.

The General Manager, who is appointed by the Mayor with approval of the City Council, has overall responsibility for managing the Department and reports to the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners. The organizational structure along with position control is established through approval by Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners.

The following is the current approved management organizational structure:



This management structure represents the latest re-organization of the Department necessary to meet operational needs and to combat the current economic recession which has resulted in losses of more than a third of the Department's budget and staffing. The Department moved toward centralizing core functions as well as creating a new Partnership Division for the purpose of enhancing the Department's ability to offer programming, solicit donations and make capital improvements utilizing funding and personnel resources outside the Department.

The Griffith Park Superintendent position was created to better organize and coordinate the many user groups, concessionaires, tenants, capital projects, community groups and maintenance needs throughout the park. Although the position is vacant due to budgetary reasons, it is the intent of the Department to restore this position as funding allows.

The philosophy and specific goals and objectives for managing Griffith Park are detailed throughout the chapters of this Visioning document. In addition to establishing priorities and benchmarks for successful stewardship, these chapters place particular emphasis on ensuring that Park management and staff are well educated in the meaning and intent of the Urban Wilderness Identity and what steps are necessary to ensure balance with that Identity and the diverse recreational uses throughout the park. It is also essential to ensure viable and active involvement of community representatives in decision-making regarding the use of Park resources and assets.

Care must be taken to ensure that decisions made about the Park and the use of its resources take place in a manner that is open to the public and fully transparent. No single individual or group should be given the ability to decide upon any project unless and until a public process is utilized that permits public participation in the suggested use. In the absence of such a management structure the unique resources of the Park can quickly become fragmented among various interest groups and it can lose forever the overall natural setting which makes it so unique and valuable.

The Department has sought to achieve necessary community involvement through the creation of Park Advisory Boards (PAB's). Many parks across the City operate very successfully with this type of community input into the operations of those parks.

The Department has promulgated and published a handbook known as the "Park Advisory Board Handbook." This Handbook generally describes the function, obligation and responsibility of entities known as "Park Advisory Boards." Park Advisory Boards are created by the Recreation Director/Facility Manager of a particular facility. They operate under the guidance of the Recreation Director/Facility Manager. Each Board is to have an uneven number of members and to meet at least once each quarter. The Department reports having more than 150 of these Park Advisory Boards with more than 1,000 community volunteers involved in the Boards. Other regional parks that currently

have Park Advisory Boards include Hansen Dam, Debs Park and Ken Malloy Harbor Regional Park.

While Griffith Park does not currently have a PAB, the next step in the evolution of ensuring the successful oversight of this Vision is to create a PAB that is representative of the size and diversity of the user groups within Griffith Park.

The creation of a PAB would be of great help in coordination of the roles and responsibilities of the Resource Board already in existence. The Resource Board brings together leaders from different areas of the park to discuss future upgrades and give status updates to local stakeholders. The mission of the Resource Board is to bring together diverse groups so that everyone can have a voice in the public process. The Griffith Park Resource Board meets on a semi-annual basis to forge a dialogue on all matters related to the park and was first convened in 1988. The Resource Board has been valuable for communicating and reaching out to the public regarding proposals, projects and issues in Griffith Park. This important channel of communication should continue.

The long term goal of restoring the Superintendent position would again ensure the coordination and managing of the both the Resource Board and PAB.

## **II. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

The City Charter mandates that an annual appropriation be made equal to the sum of not less than 0.0325% of the assessed value of all City property for the financial support of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Pursuant to the Charter, 0.0325% of the assessed value of property in the City of Los Angeles is placed in the Recreation and Parks Fund, along with whatever other general funds or other funds are directed to that fund. Pursuant to Section 591, Charter of the City of Los Angeles, all sums in the Recreation and Parks Fund are to be credited to, and used by, the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners. Unless provided for by separate ordinance, all funds generated by and through Griffith Park go into the Recreation and Parks Fund. Although Griffith Park does generate specific on-site revenues from user fees, leases and concessions, such revenues are deposited into the Department's general fund for the benefit of the entire Department.

In addition, Division 5, Chapter 113 of the Administrative Code for the City of Los Angeles established, by ordinance, the Griffith Park 2004 Trust Fund. The Griffith Park 2004 Trust Fund was established for receipt of money from a settlement reached in litigation entitled *City of Glendale v. City of Los Angeles*, Los Angeles Superior Court Case Number BC 275062. That case involved the sale of just over one acre of Griffith Park land, 49,388 square feet of Park land, to relieve traffic congestion within the City of Glendale. The amount paid from the City of Glendale was over \$600,000.00. The funds are restricted to capital improvements in Griffith Park. Pursuant to the Administrative Code, the decision as to how to use the funds is to be made by the General Manager with approval of the

Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners and in consultation with the Council member from Council District Four.

It is important to note that although the funding derived from the charter mandated property assessments has remained fairly consistent, the General Fund infusions into the Department's budget have greatly diminished. Further negative impacts have been the "charge backs" for the cost of water, power, trash and other indirect charges resulting in more than a 25% decrease to the Department's budget.

It is for this reason that the successful stewardship of this Visioning document, along with the long term sustainability of all parks, is being threatened by drastic reductions in staffing and funding. Consequently, larger discussions need to take place across the City with organized community groups regarding what measures are needed to protect all parks similar to the visions outlined in this document.

### **III. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- A. Management of Griffith Park should be undertaken by a Superintendent Position responsible for coordinating all activities within the park.
- B. A Park ecologist position is essential to the maintenance of the Griffith Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.
- C. The Park Rangers Division, employed by the Department and based in Griffith Park, should remain fully staffed and funded and retain their status as Peace Officers.
- D. Establishment of a Park Advisory Board that is representative of the communities, organizations and users that a park of this size serves.

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## APPENDIX

1. Wildlife Management Plan for Griffith Park, Daniel S. Cooper, Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc., 2008  
<http://www.friendsofgriffithpark.org/gpwildlifemgtpgm.pdf>
2. Griffith Park Plants and Trees, Anne Waisgerber, City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks, Undated
3. Park and Recreation Trends in California, California Outdoor Recreation Planning Program, California State Parks, 2005  
[http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/recreation\\_trends\\_081505.pdf](http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/recreation_trends_081505.pdf)
4. A Preliminary Large Mammal and Herptile Survey of Griffith Park, Los Angeles, California, Daniel S. Cooper, Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc., 2007  
<http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Bulletin-Southern-California-Academy-Sciences/182976474.html>
5. Griffith Park Tanks – Complete Inventory
6. Griffith Park Historic Resources Map

### OTHER KEY LINKS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Griffith Park Natural History Survey

<http://www.bing.com/search?q=GRIFFITH+PARK+NATURAL+HISTORY+SURVEY&src=ie9tr>

Griffith Park Historic Cultural Monument Application and Council Adoption

[http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2008/08-3086\\_rpt\\_chc\\_11-12-08.pdf](http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2008/08-3086_rpt_chc_11-12-08.pdf)



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Barry A. Sanders, President  
Lynn Alvarez, Vice President  
W. Jerome Williams, Commissioner  
Jill Werner, Commissioner  
Jonathan Williams, Commissioner

### **THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT**

Michael Shull, Interim General Manager  
Jon Kirk Mukri, Former General Manager  
Regina Adams, Executive Officer  
Vicki Israel, Assistant General Manager  
Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager

### **GRIFFITH PARK WORKING GROUP**

Louis Alvarado, CD 4 Appointee  
Richard Bogy, Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council  
Lynn Brown, Corral 38 Equestrian Trails  
Clare Darden, Griffith Jenkins Griffith Charitable Trust  
Jeff Gardner, Atwater Village Neighborhood Council  
George Grace, Franklin Hills Residents Association  
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Craig Kessler, Public Links Golf Association  
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### ***Alternatives***

Lucinda Phillips, Jim Gilberts, Chris Laib, Rulon Openshaw

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