



April 21, 2021

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

Honorable Councilmembers:

*"Creating dynamic experiences to connect people and animals"*

Los Angeles Zoo  
5333 Zoo Drive  
Los Angeles  
California 90027  
323/644-4200  
Fax 323/662-9786  
<http://www.lazoo.org>

Eric Garcetti  
Mayor

Nithya Raman  
Council Member  
4<sup>th</sup> District

Zoo Commissioners

Karen B. Winnick  
*President*

Bernardo Silva  
*Vice President*

Margot Armbruster

Christopher Hopkins

Daryl Smith

Richard Lichtenstein  
*ex officio member*

Denise M. Verret  
Chief Executive Officer  
& Zoo Director

The Zoo Department respectfully submits this correspondence for your information and consideration regarding the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2021-22 Proposed Budget. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to challenge us all in addressing critical services, reassessing our priorities, and reimagining our future.

The proposed budget submitted by the Zoo was based on known conditions impacting the potential for the return to full operating capacity. This included resources and revenue projections based on maintaining the Zoo's operations at 50% visitor capacity and restoration of limited programming within current level resources in conformance with Los Angeles County Public Health protocols. The Zoo's ability to increase operations beyond this level will be predicated by guidance from health authorities and sufficient staffing and expense resources to support the required and expanded operating protocols.

The Mayor's proposed budget includes additional revenue projections (\$781,210) above the Zoo's projections which assume resumption of additional fee-based programs that cannot be operated without further assessment of operating capacity, impact on animal safety and welfare, and determination of additional resources to support and facilitate them in accordance with County Health Department protocols. The budget further proposes a reduction (\$200,000) in as needed salaries and elimination of 18 positions from the separation incentive program that are critical to animal welfare, facility maintenance, safety and guest operations that support current level operations in addition to the ability to potentially increase operating capacity.

While the Zoo is hopeful for continued recovery, there remain many uncertainties in the ability to achieve these outcomes which include not only needing the corresponding resources and funding, but the uncertainty as to the public's response to expanded operations still within pandemic conditions. The Zoo feels that its original revenue projections provide a more realistic and conservative approach to the next fiscal year. Based on these assumptions, the Zoo respectfully requests the following adjustments to the Mayor's proposed budget for consideration:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reduce revenue from other fee based programs from \$983,500 to the Zoo's original proposal of \$202,290. This would require a corresponding increase of \$781,210 in the General Fund contribution to the Zoo.
2. Restore \$200,000 in the Salaries As Needed Account to support current level operations.



An Equal  
Employment  
Opportunity  
Employer

Accredited by the Association  
of Zoos and Aquariums

Member of the American  
Alliance of Museums

Member of the California Association  
of Zoos and Aquariums

3. Restore 18 position authorities (without funding) deleted as a result of the separation incentive program to allow for flexibility and capacity to meet critical operating needs and restore services as pandemic conditions improve. The positions provide direct support for animal welfare, safety, facility maintenance and guest facing operations and are listed in the table that follows.

No.	Class Code	Class Title
3	4305	Senior Animal Keeper
4	4304	Animal Keeper
1	3345	Senior Carpenter
1	3773	Mechanical Repairer
1	3423	Painter
1	3583	Truck Operator
1	3913	Irrigation Specialist
1	3141	Gardener Caretaker
1	3156	Custodian
1	1368	Senior Administrative Clerk
1	1358	Administrative Clerk
1	1670-3	Graphics Designer III
1	1793-2	Photographer II
<b>18</b>		<b>Total</b>

The Zoo will continue to work with the City and health authorities to safely expand its reopening and manage capacity and other revenue generating programs as resources will allow to minimize the impact to the General Fund while maintaining animal welfare and safety as a priority. The Department is appreciative of the support provided to the Zoo during this unprecedented situation and looks forward to working cooperatively to continue in its recovery efforts.

Respectfully Submitted,



Denise M. Verret  
Chief Executive Office & Zoo Director

DMV:MK