

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at NCsupport@lacity.org.

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Atwater Village Neighborhood Council

Name: Karen Barnett

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(7) Nay(1) Abstain(4) Ineligible(1) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 11/11/2021

Type of NC Board Action: Against unless Amended

Impact Information

Date: 12/07/2021

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 21-0828

Agenda Date:

Item Number:

Summary: Dear Honorable Council Members, We do not support the LA Zoo Plan Project but support the project Alternative 1, the “Environmentally Superior Alternative” as described in the LA Zoo Vision Plan Project Final. We find it to be the least invasive of all proposals negatively impacting Griffith Park’s natural environment, its existing wildlife, surrounding communities and is the best option for a future Los Angeles Zoo. This option is also in line with the LA Zoo’s mission and vision statements (www.lazoo.org/about/) Of particular concern to Atwater Village is the effect on traffic and parking of the large projected increase in Zoo visitation from 1,743,800 million to 3 million. We request that you recommend additional studies for the potential traffic at Los Feliz Blvd, the park's main entrance and “alternative” LA Zoo entrance. Specific impacts to Atwater Village were not fully discussed or realized in the EIR process. For example, the report didn’t take into account that the Zoo’s website “Alternate Driving Directions” directs visitors to Los Feliz Blvd. (<https://www.lazoo.org/plan-your-visit/getting-here/>) Impacts to Los Feliz Blvd. and Atwater Village will be significant. Los Feliz is one of three bridges that connect Atwater Village to the City heading west. The EIR failed to note that one of those bridges, Glendale-Hyperion Bridge will be retrofitted in the near future. This will put stress on Los Feliz Blvd. and the I-5 exits as construction closures occur for autos, cyclists and pedestrians. Also, we note that increasing Zoo traffic is in conflict with the City’s ongoing efforts to lessen Park traffic through the use of shuttles. Additional impacts to Atwater Village, on attached pdf.



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AVNC Officers Co-Chairs: Josh Hertz, Edward Morrissey • Treasurer: Anthony Forester • Secretary: Tim Jennings

November 11, 2021

City Council Members and Arts, Parks, Health, Education, and Neighborhoods Committee
200 North Spring Street, Room 275
Los Angeles, California 90012

Council File: 21-0828 (against unless amended)

Title Los Angeles Zoo Vision Plan / Environmental Impact Report / Infrastructure and Animal Facility Improvements

Dear Honorable Council Members,

We do not support the LA Zoo Plan Project but support the project Alternative 1, the "Environmentally Superior Alternative" as described in the LA Zoo Vision Plan Project Final. We find it to be the least invasive of all proposals negatively impacting Griffith Park's natural environment, its existing wildlife, surrounding communities and is the best option for a future Los Angeles Zoo. This option is also in line with the LA Zoo's mission and vision statements (www.lazoo.org/about/)

Of particular concern to Atwater Village is the effect on traffic and parking of the large projected increase in Zoo visitation from 1,743,800 million to 3 million. We request that you recommend additional studies for the potential traffic at Los Feliz Blvd, the park's main entrance and "alternative" LA Zoo entrance.

Specific impacts to Atwater Village were not fully discussed or realized in the EIR process. For example, the report didn't take into account that the Zoo's website "Alternate Driving Directions" directs visitors to Los Feliz Blvd. (<https://www.lazoo.org/plan-your-visit/getting-here/>) Impacts to Los Feliz Blvd. and Atwater Village will be significant. Los Feliz is one of three bridges that connect Atwater Village to the City heading west. The EIR failed to note that one of those bridges, Glendale-Hyperion Bridge will be retrofitted in the near future. This will put stress on Los Feliz Blvd. and the I-5 exits as construction closures occur for autos, cyclists and pedestrians.

Also, we note that increasing Zoo traffic is in conflict with the City's ongoing efforts to lessen Park traffic through the use of shuttles.

Additional impacts to Atwater Village:

Traffic and air quality:

Much of Atwater Village is at or above the 75th percentile on CalEnviroScreen. An increase in zoo traffic will impact community residents and river path users. Cyclists ride next to I-5 with no more than a chain link fence to separate. (maybe recommend mulch wall)

Multimodal transportation to and from LA Zoo:

The Vision Plan provides an internal option and incentives for cyclists: visitors and employees. Yet the plan provides no improvements for cyclists to reach the LA Zoo. Los Feliz Blvd has no bike paths to the Griffith Park entrance or the LA River Bike Path. There is currently no signal at the I-5

southbound Los Feliz exit; it's currently a dangerous situation for recreational users, and increased traffic will exacerbate this issue. The plan lacks a coordinated traffic strategy to move patrons to and from the Zoo that considers multiple forms of transportation (bicycles, bus and pedestrian) and has been developed in coordination with LADOT and local communities.

Crystal Springs Traffic:

Any increase in Zoo attendance would exacerbate traffic through the park, negatively impacting other recreational users (cyclists, golfers, etc.). We would like a traffic study and mitigation plan.

Aerial Tram:

The development of the Aerial Tram pathway and lighting should not exceed the physical boundaries of proposed Zoo expansion in order to keep vistas as natural as possible and approval of the tram should be conditioned on its limited reach, specifically prohibited against providing service to other areas of the park. Evening hours should have low to no lights.

Operational hours, lighting and noise:

The Zoo should assure local residents that operational hours will not exceed 5 PM. Special events should be the exception not the rule, noise and lighting should be as minimal as possible to the quality of life of zoo residents and surrounding communities.

Outreach:

We also believe the vision plan did not receive enough outreach. As a neighborhood council with Griffith Park in it's boundaries, we feel that the AVNC and Atwater residents were not giving much information on the plan. There were no presentations by Zoo Administration or BOE to the AVNC board. We encourage both parties to reach out to the AVNC at board@atwatervillage.org.

This committee agrees the Zoo needs to be upgraded and maintained but expansion should be limited. In addition, public sentiment is moving away from traditional zoos and animal captivity.

We feel that the full plan as described in the LA Zoo vision plan is extreme and is contrary to the city's current goals on climate, by worsening vehicular traffic and tailpipe emissions. Of particular concern is the proposal for a multi-story parking garage which would impact the natural vistas which city goers treasure when visiting the Park. Another more visionary plan, as suggested by our committee, would be to cap a portion (or all of the I-5) to provide adjacent and convenient parking, to create better park circulation, improve safety and access for all visitors, recreational users and residents of Los Angeles.

In sum, perhaps the zoo's vision plan should be reassessed after the Olympics or 2030 (10 years) before moving forward with additional implementation. If larger areas are currently needed for certain animals/sections, then a LA Zoo satellite location should be considered.

We hope you will support Alternative 1 and take our suggestions into serious consideration. We also hope you consider our request for a more comprehensive study of the Los Feliz entrance. The Zoo should be improved but not at the expense of the natural environment and its inhabitants.

Thank you for your time and consideration.


Josh Hertz
AVNC Co-Chair

Edward Morrissey
AVNC Co-Chair

CC: Mayor's Office, Hon. Mitch O'farrell and staff, Hon. Nithya Raman and staff, Mike Shull (RAP), Denise Verret (Zoo), Stefanie Smith (RAP), RAP Commissioners, and other staff members.