



Friends of Griffith Park

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friendsofgriffithpark.org

March 13, 2015

Michael A. Shull, General Manager
City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department
1200 West 7th Street, 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Mike,

We fully understand the distress expressed by some Hollywoodland and Beachwood Canyon residents associated with increased traffic due to visitors seeking to view the Hollywood Sign.

Since 2011, measures have been deployed to reduce the impacts in western Griffith Park residential areas. Measures include:

- Increased security presence, with LADOT and Park Rangers who, at times, redirect traffic to the Griffith Observatory
- Preferential Parking Districts
- Controlled gate access at Hollyridge Trailhead, and the closure of a 22-car parking lot
- Large digital signage staged at base of Beachwood Drive to discourage Hollywood Sign visitor access, redirecting to Griffith Observatory
- Controversial clearing for a viewing site near Lake Hollywood Park
- Manipulating driving directions available on smartphone apps to direct Hollywood Sign visitors to the Griffith Observatory, and changing and creating websites to direct Hollywood Sign traffic to the Griffith Observatory
- Pay-to-ride shuttle system travelling the 1.1 mile stretch of Mt Hollywood Drive

During the time-frame these measures were implemented, the vehicular traffic near the Griffith Observatory increased immensely.

Reopening a short section of Mt Hollywood Drive to vehicles is an action first suggested by Councilmember LaBonge in 2011. However, he originally proposed a mere one-third mile section be re-opened. The community and park advocates, including Friends of Griffith Park, opposed that plan based upon the extent of passive recreation it would affect. The road closure in 1992 made Griffith Park safer and resulted in positive benefits to wildlife and habitat.

Our organization was tacit when the road was re-opened for the currently-operating shuttle vans. After all, impacts from limited shuttles are considerably less than that from

open vehicular traffic on Mt. Hollywood Drive. However, we are alarmed by the level of unacceptable activity at shuttle van stop #1, and there are obvious negative environmental impacts at this area. Visitor behavior has not been guided, managed or controlled as part of the shuttle program, as we would have hoped. New, unsafe trails have emerged, all in less than one year. Large areas are now trampled. Smoking, littering, and graffiti are considerably worse than a year ago.

We have concerns about the re-opening of a one-mile-plus section of Mt. Hollywood Drive to personal vehicular traffic for the planned "Spring Break" pilot project:

- We are concerned that the metrics for evaluating success of the pilot project are vague and not clearly defined.
- We do not understand why the pilot project does not include charging for parking while the intention is to charge for parking in the future. Shouldn't a pilot proximate the real situation as closely as possible?
- Parking cars on only one side of Western Canyon Road helps correct some of the current hazards, especially to pedestrians, but will force more cars further into the park on Mt. Hollywood Drive.

We are pleased the Department has responded to the community's concerns that 10:00 p.m. gate closure time for Mt. Hollywood Drive is far too late. We appreciate changing the gate closure time (ingress) to 8:00 p.m. We are also happy that the Department plans to have an extraordinary security presence while Mt. Hollywood Drive is open, and we can not understate the importance of monitoring smoking and other illegal activities. Mt. Hollywood Drive is adjacent to huge Brush Canyon, largely pristine habitat, unburned in decades.

For the long-term planning, we encourage the City to use every resource available (including LADOT and traffic experts) to address circulation alternatives which may involve perimeter or off-site parking on high-demand days. The problem of too much vehicular traffic can only be solved by reducing the number of vehicles entering the park, not by making more parking available beyond the points where the traffic itself is problematic.

Sincerely,



Gerry Hans
President

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