Communication from Public

Name: Marian Dodge
Date Submitted: 09/23/2022 05:35 PM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: I oppose Alternative 1.5 unless it is amended.

Norman Mundy, Environmental Supervisor II
Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering, Environmental Management Group
1149 S. Broadway, Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA, 90015
Email: Norman.Mundy@lacity.com

September 23, 2022

Re: LA Zoo Vision Plan: Focused Recirculated EIR Comments
Oppose unless amended

Dear Mr. Mundy,

As a member of GLAZA for more than 30 years, I was very encouraged to see the positive changes made in Alternative 1.5. The Zoo listened to the opinions of the outraged public and eliminated numerous of the egregious concepts in the original Vision Plan. However my enthusiasm was short lived when I saw some of the concepts that remained – the excavation of Condor Canyon and the development of the California Visitor Center.

The FREIR claims that Alternate 1.5 is the environmentally superior option. Where is the specific data to back up that claim? Environmentally superior compared to what? The Zoo claims that there will be lower attendance with Alternative 1.5. The attendance figures cited are all over the place and inconsistent. How, precisely, did you arrive at those figures? How can the Zoo claim attendance will be lower when they have expanded the Entry Garden and Park event space adjacent to the parking lot to the size of a football field. That will hold a lot of people. With 201 events anticipate per year, that will *increase* attendance exponentially, not *decrease* attendance.

How can excavating a trench 60 feet deep through a hill currently covered with native chaparral possibly be considered environmentally superior? Not trenching or blasting is obviously environmentally superior.

The Zoo wants to showcase their Condor Recovery program, and well they should as it is an outstanding example of the kind of conservation that zoo should be doing. Why not place an exhibit behind the aviary and near the Birds in Flight show? It would make sense to have a condor exhibit near other birds so you can appreciate how huge their wingspan really is.

Why does the Zoo still need the California Visitor Center when they have added a huge event space by the parking lot? The California Visitor Center would destroy a significant ridgeline and be visible for miles around. It would have a major impact on the aesthetics of the park. How will the Zoo mitigate the loss of the ridgeline? How will the zoo mitigate the lights that will shine until late at night? How will the Zoo mitigate the noise that will come from amplified music as well as unamplified music? How will the zoo mitigate these impacts on native animals in the park as well as on their own caged zoo animals?

The event spaces will no doubt hold late night events that serve alcohol. How will the Zoo mitigate the impact of drunk drivers are narrow, winding park roads or those who get on the adjacent freeways?

I have the impression that the Zoo's consulting firm Wood just threw as many wild concepts as they could think of at the wall to see what would stick. Many of their ideas are sticky indeed and shouldn't be touched. Their analysis appears superficial and hasty.

I hope that the Zoo will continue to listen to the public. Did you notice that the only public speakers who liked Alternative 1.5 at the hearing identified themselves as Zoo docents? We did. The Zoo needs to

continue to listen to the public, eliminate Condor Canyon and the California Visitor Center from Alternate 1.5 and present a realistic and fiscally responsible vision plan.

Sincerely,

Marian Dodge
2648 N. Commonwealth Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Communication from Public

Name: Adam Villani
Date Submitted: 09/23/2022 04:52 PM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: Re: LA Zoo Vision Plan Focused Recirculated EIR Hello! In addition to being the parent of two children who love visiting the L.A. Zoo, I am a longtime employee with the Los Angeles City Planning Department. Speaking on my own behalf, I am excited for the LA Zoo Vision Plan, as it will provide visitors of all ages with an improved zoo experience as well as improving the welfare of Zoo animals and opportunities for conservation. From a visitor standpoint, it's always been a bit awkward how far into the Zoo one has to walk, especially with young children or in the hot sun, before one gets to the bulk of the animal displays. The Vision Plan addresses this issue head-on by bringing more experiences closer to the entrance and providing a more varied, accessible internal circulation plan with different pathways to explore the zoo, rather than a single long entry/exit pathway. I'm also happy to see opportunities for updated habitats for the Zoo animals, with more space to roam and more realistic environments; this will improve their mental health and allow them to thrive more. Alternative 1.5 also looks to be a great alternative to address the environmental impacts of the original plan, focusing on specific impacts rather than simply a reduced version of the original plan. Vineyards may be common in California, but they are non-native, disturbed agricultural land, not native habitat, and thus not appropriate for the Zoo. I'm happy to see more of the sensitive natural communities of coast live oak woodland be preserved and restored. Lastly, I'm hopeful that the reduced emphasis on vehicle parking will encourage the Zoo to work with LADOT to provide more DASH service as an alternative mode of visiting the Zoo. I do not see any deficiencies with the Focused Recirculated EIR and support its certification along with the approval of the Vision Plan itself. I am submitting this comment letter both to the Zoo project planner and the City Council file. Sincerely, Adam Villani
2825 Yurok Court Simi Valley, CA 93063
adamnvillani@yahoo.com

Communication from Public

Name: Lisa Hart
Date Submitted: 09/23/2022 10:29 AM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: The Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance (NCSA) has voted to oppose the Los Angeles Zoo's expansion project Alternative 1.5 and to remain in support of Alternative 1. We thank the Mayor's Office for bringing the NCSA into this conversation and the Los Angeles Zoo for engaging with us so deeply. We also applaud the Zoo for working to ensure best practices for animal care and for listening to community feedback and proposing a scaled-down design (Alternative 1.5) that prioritizes native plants and habitats in new exhibits and that is more in keeping with the character of Griffith Park than the original proposed project, which we did not support. We support the mission of the zoo, which is to lead the way in saving wildlife and connecting Angelenos to the natural world by providing exemplary animal care, delivering distinctive and diverse learning opportunities, and creating unforgettable experiences. We think some of the changes proposed in Alternative 1.5, such as elimination of habitat for sensitive native species (see the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2021 letter) and commercialization of a ridgeline, would not further the zoo's mission as much as other less disruptive options that would do more to support Griffith Park's existing ecosystem and biodiversity while allowing us to enjoy it. We are concerned that the environmental costs of some of the proposed changes would outweigh any benefits and would not necessarily enhance people's experience of nature.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE®

September 23, 2022

Dear City and LA Zoo leadership:

The Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance (NCSA) has voted to oppose the Los Angeles Zoo's expansion project Alternative 1.5 and to remain in support of Alternative 1.

We thank the Mayor's Office for bringing the NCSA into this conversation and the Los Angeles Zoo for engaging with us so deeply. We also applaud the Zoo for working to ensure best practices for animal care and for listening to community feedback and proposing a scaled-down design (Alternative 1.5) that prioritizes native plants and habitats in new exhibits and that is more in keeping with the character of Griffith Park than the original proposed project, which we did not support.

We support the mission of the zoo, which is to *lead the way in saving wildlife and connecting Angelenos to the natural world by providing exemplary animal care, delivering distinctive and diverse learning opportunities, and creating unforgettable experiences*. We think some of the changes proposed in Alternative 1.5, such as elimination of habitat for sensitive native species (see the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2021 letter) and commercialization of a ridgeline, would not further the zoo's mission as much as other less disruptive options that would do more to support Griffith Park's existing ecosystem and biodiversity while allowing us to enjoy it. We are concerned that the environmental costs of some of the proposed changes would outweigh any benefits and would not necessarily enhance people's experience of nature.

Thank you,

Lisa Hart
Board Member

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 09/23/2022 10:41 AM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: Generally for the idea of giving the animals more room. However, what's concerning about the plan is the extensive hillside regrading that is required for the new areas, specifically in the condor corridor. The artists interpretation of the canyon, shown on page 33, looks like a highway cut through that will make a giant cliff, which is then going to be programmed as a rock climbing wall. It's unclear as to how the project is planning to balance cut and fill.

Communication from Public

Name: Carl M.
Date Submitted: 09/23/2022 11:36 AM
Council File No: 21-0828
Comments for Public Posting: I am writing to express my support for Alternative 1.5 as described in the L.A. Zoo Vision Plan's Focused Recirculated Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Alternative 1.5 is also known as the California Focused Conservation Alternative and is the Environmentally Superior Alternative. As the world faces its sixth mass extinction of species, the simultaneous conservation of local and global species has never been more important for both biodiversity and human livelihoods, and the Zoo is at the forefront of this work. Alternative 1.5 is the best use of the Zoo's 133 acres, providing the space and infrastructure to ensure the best care and welfare of the animals, engage significantly more people in conservation, create more equitable access to nature, and develop better habitat for native wildlife. Many of the Zoo's facilities are more than 50 years old and need to be upgraded to improve animal welfare and care, ensure visitor accessibility for all Angelenos, and meet increasing sustainability needs in the face of climate change. Alternative 1.5 will build the California Area first, which will allow the public to experience native wildlife species, such as the federally-protected California Condor, in person for the first time. In addition to providing a more than 160% increase in spaces for animals in larger, contiguous environments, Alternative 1.5 will result in the planting of more native trees and shrubs and will preserve and restore 6 acres of native oak woodland, which advances prevailing biodiversity and habitat connectivity goals. New public hilltop access in the California Area will give many Angelenos a first-time, unforgettable perspective of how the Zoo's critical conservation work fits into our natural environment - from its home in Griffith Park to the Verdugo and San Gabriel Mountains. Finally, by removing the parking structure and implementing the Peak Visitor Management Program, Alternative 1.5 will reduce the number of visits made to the Zoo by car. For all of these reasons, I recommend that you approve Alternative 1.5, the California Focused Conservation Alternative. Sincerely, Carl M., Resident of L.A. City Council District 4

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 09/23/2022 09:47 PM

Council File No: 21-0828

Comments for Public Posting: I would like to express my opposition to the development of land surrounding the Los Angeles Zoo to develop Condor Canyon and for the "event space" expansion at the Zoo entrance, as part of Alternative 1.5. This type of land development is the very type of activity that has led to the need for zoos. Instead of developing portions of Griffith Park adjacent to the zoo, efforts should focus on preserving the natural areas that still exist. We do not need any more commercialization of our Park. We do not need to manipulate nature to build a climbing wall. Again, this manipulation of nature is the very reason that zoos exist - because habitat has been destroyed and efforts to save certain species, in the form of zoos, have resulted. Furthermore, with respect to the "event space" aspect of Alt. 1.5, it does not appear that the city needs any additional entertainment venues, especially not in the backyard of critical habitat and ecosystems that have nocturnal habits. This is an opportunity to shift the focus away from entertainment/profit and toward creative citizen and visitor engagement that does not involve entertainment, but rather, service and stewardship.