



October 11, 2021

To: Councilmembers John Lee (Chair), Mike Bonin, Mark Ridley-Thomas
Art, Parks, Health, Education, and Neighborhoods Committee, Los Angeles City Council

Re: Los Angeles Zoo CF 21-0828; Support for Alternative 1

The Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) was formed many years ago to improve the state of our city's urban forest by convening community representatives from the 15 council districts and a Mayor's representative. Committee members are chosen by their council member and appointed by the mayor to advise the city on practices & policies, and advocate on behalf of our urban forest. As such, we are submitting this letter to express our support of Alternative 1 from the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Garden's Vision Plan Project.

This alternative plan has been identified by CEQA as the Environmentally Superior Alternative to other proposed plans for the Zoo, and would keep intact the most number of Protected Tree and Shrub species, as well as their associated plant and animal communities. While we recognize that the footprint of the Zoo will not be increasing past its current borders within their proposed Vision Plan, we are particularly concerned with the potential loss of woodlands that include 201 City Protected Trees and Shrubs, such as coast live oaks and toyons, which are protected species, and California black walnut trees which are also rare and a near threatened species.

Additionally the August 2021 adoption of the LASAN City Biodiversity Report recognizes that Los Angeles lies in a globally recognized biodiversity hotspot and elevates the need for the conservation of native plants and animals. It also directs every city department to follow its guidelines and utilize the recommendations of the Biodiversity Expert Council as it relates to any developments which threaten or violate our City's biodiversity goals.

As the Zoo lies within the Department of Recreation and Parks, per the recent biodiversity directive from Council, it is the Department's responsibility to guide the course of projects within its boundaries towards the solutions which support and conserve biodiversity in our city.

We feel strongly that, while the Zoo's global conservation programs and goals are laudable and to be commended, the conservation of Griffith Park's unique flora and fauna should be equally prioritized and honored. First and foremost, this means first doing no harm to existing intact ecosystems, especially sensitive natural communities of native oak and walnut woodlands.

CFAC joins the Friends of Griffith Park and others in its support of Alternative 1, and also urges Council to take seriously the review and assessments made by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as the Trustee Agency, in their comment letter regarding the DEIR for the Zoo's Vision Plan.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shelley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shelley Billik
Chair

Cc: Councilmember Nithya Raman
Helen Rotolo
Rachel Fox
Michael A. Shull
Stephanie Smith