

**Living with an Icon:
A Report from the Neighborhoods
Beneath the Hollywood Sign**



January 9, 2023

**Hollywood United Neighborhood Council
Certified Neighborhood Council #52
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January 9, 2023

To the Reader:

This report was prepared by the Hollywood United Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee from June 2022 through December 2022 during a series of public meetings. The report was presented in draft form for adoption by the Hollywood United Neighborhood Council on January 9, 2023 at the Council's regular meeting.

Sixty community members and stakeholders attended the meeting where the report was summarized and presented by the Chair of the Hollywood Sign Committee. After the presentation, twenty-five stakeholders offered public comment.

The report was adopted as unanimously by members present with one recusal. This is the final version of the report as adopted.

Thank you for taking the time to review the report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Morrison".

Robert Morrison
President
Hollywood United Neighborhood Council

LIVING WITH AN ICON

A Report from the Neighborhoods Beneath the Hollywood Sign

INTRODUCTION:

In response to continuing and unaddressed concerns by its stakeholders, the Hollywood United Neighborhood Council (HUNC) created an Ad Hoc Committee to investigate the impact of the increasing worldwide interest in the Hollywood Sign on its surrounding neighborhoods. The areas considered by the committee included Lake Hollywood Estates as well as Beachwood Canyon and the upper Beachwood neighborhood of Hollywoodland.

In this report, we establish the nature of the impact the Hollywood Sign (and associated tourism and promotion) has on our neighborhoods. We address the confluence of factors that have led us to this point, and we propose several targeted and generalized approaches where we seek partnership from the City to address these concerns.

The Committee consisted of three HUNC directors, including Sheila Irani who served as Committee Chair, Jim Van Dusen and Robert Morrison, as well as five representatives from Sign-adjacent neighborhoods, including Steve Alper, Chip Clements, John Dotto, Augusta Johnson and Kristina O'Neil.

While many of the issues and solutions presented in this report are not new, the neighborhoods have raised these issues and concerns multiple times with little response from local government and as a result the area has yet to receive adequate planning and attention.

It should be noted that most public comments at the committee's meetings are from residents who are proud to live near our city's biggest icon but are concerned with public safety and risk to natural habitat under the current unmanaged situation.

THE CHALLENGE: MILLIONS OF VISITORS IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA

The Hollywood Sign (Sign) is a globally recognized icon. It is LA's most prominent landmark. Not only is it part of the attraction for our City's 55+ million annual visitors, for many it is in fact a destination itself.

We have observed that with the exponential growth of social media, taking a selfie-style picture close to the Hollywood Sign has become wildly popular among tourists and Angelenos alike.

Until recently, analog navigation largely limited the number of visitors attempting to reach the Sign. Now GPS, coupled with way-finding digitization, has given anyone with a phone the ability to easily locate and access the Sign vista points along Mulholland Highway, Deronda Drive, and Lake Hollywood Park, all in the 90068 zip code area. In the last decade, millions of visitors have traversed these historic hillside neighborhoods by private car to closely view the Sign.

Overwhelming traffic to the Sign is not just an unpleasant experience for residents and an unsustainable one for the neighborhood's aging substandard roadways, but it is also an unsafe one for visitors and residents alike. Unaddressed, the situation will only get worse.

Previous efforts to channel Sign visitors to more distant, non-residential vista locations, such as the Griffith Observatory and the Hollywood & Highland shopping center were ineffective at reducing the number of vehicles visiting the neighborhoods. Those more distant alternatives never caught on.

Preferred Parking Districts (PPDS) have successfully provided relief in some areas, especially to residents at specific choke-points and bottlenecks. However, they are a partial solution and have not reduced the overall traffic burden caused by the Sign's visitors. Additionally, while PPDs may once have discouraged neighborhoods becoming clogged with parked cars, these restrictions are now often ignored.

As the Committee report will show, the challenge facing the City is how to mitigate the risks to public safety of residents and visitors, along with the negative impacts on natural habitats caused by the Sign's magnetic appeal.

BACKGROUND

In 1923 Los Angeles developers, Woodruff, Shoults and Chandler built the "HOLLYWOODLAND" Sign as an advertisement atop Beachwood Canyon to be seen from all over town as a promotion for the neighborhood below. As a result of the developers' eventual bankruptcy, the title of the Sign and its surrounding land was transferred to the City, and subsequently incorporated into Griffith Park. Maintenance ceased. By 1949, the Sign was in terrible disrepair and residents asked the City to dismantle it. In response, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) offered to repair the Sign if they could remove the last four letters, "LAND", and use it to promote Hollywood. The residents' request was denied and the Chamber was given permission to repair the sign.

By 1978 the Chamber had allowed the Sign to fall into disrepair again. Private donations were collected to rebuild the sign in metal, with better footings and without lighting.

Currently, the Sign is managed and maintained by the Hollywood Sign Trust (Trust) which is run by nine board members, most of whom are members of or selected by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber owns the trademarks related to the Sign. The Chamber collects all Sign-related licensing fees and royalties, an amount said to approach \$1 million annually. In turn, when conditions are met, the Chamber funds the Trust up to \$150,000 a year, with the remainder of the revenue to be used at the Chamber's discretion.

Griffith Park, where the Sign is located, is managed by Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP), which receives permit fees for filming within Griffith Park.

Due to the divided ownership and control structure of the Sign, neither the Chamber, the Trust, the City nor RAP currently accept responsibility for managing the millions of visitors who come to view the Sign.

Los Angeles enjoys a significant financial benefit from tourism measuring over \$36 billion annually per the LA Times. This includes significant tax revenues from hotels, rental cars, and sales tax. By failing to adequately plan and manage this popular tourist destination, the City is jeopardizing the economic benefit resulting from this landmark.

EVER-INCREASING POPULARITY

Eyewitness accounts, in-person surveys, internet commentary and cell-phone location data all indicate a skyrocketing increase of visitors to the Sign.

Digital way-finding has created convenient methods to access the Sign by both pedestrians and vehicles. In December 2022, a search of the term "Hollywood Sign" produced 1.23 billion results. The Sign is geotagged an average of 1 million times a year in social media posts.

Since its inception in 1996, social media has managed to infiltrate over half of the 7.84 billion people in the world. It is estimated that by 2023 there will be 4.74 billion, or 59.3% of the total global population using social media.

With the ease of digital way-finding, the expansion of social media and the hosting of the World Cup in 2026 and the Olympics in 2028, the residents below the Sign are anticipating the number of visitors to the Hollywood Hills surrounding the Sign will explode.

SPECIFIC NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS

Too many vehicles

There is no public transit serving the areas immediately below the Sign. Without alternatives, the millions of visitors wishing to visit the Sign vistas are forced to travel through hillside neighborhoods by private vehicle or on foot.

Two of the most popular Sign vista destinations (Lake Hollywood Park and Deronda plateau) are within the boundaries of Griffith Park. RAP does not provide parking for any visitor vehicles. The narrow hillside residential streets are easily and often clogged, as visitors search for limited parking. The intensity of the congestion is exacerbated when frustrated drivers resort to parking along red curbs, in front of fire hydrants, or double park on narrow roads while they take photographs of the Sign.

The lack of parking on hillside roads worsens the congestion as does an unusually restricted number of routes in and out of the entire mountainous area. Additionally, many tourists opt to traverse these roads on foot creating risk and danger for all concerned as there are no sidewalks in most of the neighborhoods below the Sign.

LADOT Parking Enforcement Officers can be found in these residential areas, but there is a real need for Traffic Control Officers on a regular basis to manage the congestion. To date, increased parking enforcement has little discernible effect on reducing the overall number of vehicles coming to the enforced areas.

Substandard Infrastructure

- 1) Roads: The physical infrastructure in the neighborhoods below the Sign was not engineered to handle the volume of traffic it currently supports. The 100-year-old hillside roads are rapidly deteriorating under increasing visitor pressure. As more substantial repairs become necessary, more dangerous congestion can be expected.
- 2) Facilities: After driving to see LA's iconic landmark from its most popular vistas, visitors will find no bathroom facilities. Many of the Sign's visitors are forced to improvise wherever they can, which is an inconvenience for visitors and a health hazard for residents.
- 3) Cell Service: The residential areas beneath the Sign have poor cell service which causes navigation systems to become unavailable and visitors to become lost. Most importantly, cell phone users often cannot call for assistance in an emergency.

Emergency Access and Evacuation

There is no official evacuation plan on record for residents or visitors. Due to substandard infrastructure, both residents and visitors are imperiled in any emergency, especially should a natural disaster strike.

Neighborhoods below the Sign and Griffith Park have a documented history of fires caused by careless smoking, fireworks, arson, and homeless encampments. With only two routes for egress, safe evacuation can barely be ensured for residents without adding the unmanaged congestion caused by Hollywood Sign visitors.

These congested conditions significantly hamper emergency response from fire, police, ranger, and ambulance services. Additionally, the Sign and surrounding neighborhoods are in a Very High Fire Severity Zone, exponentially magnifying the danger. Fire trucks will have difficulty reaching the fire as visitors and residents attempt to flee by car, creating bottlenecks on the narrow streets.

Hollywood Sign Lighting

The Chamber and Trust have indicated that they intend to light the sign on special occasions. Neighborhood residents are concerned that illuminating the sign at night will attract a heavy influx of visitors. Naturalists are concerned about the impact on wildlife, and Griffith Park's natural habitats.

Helicopters and Drones

Low-flying helicopter tours and private drones flown around the sign are a constant annoyance to residents and visitors alike. Atop of Mt. Lee, behind the Hollywood Sign, are the Homeland Security, LAPD, LAFD dispatch towers that can be a target by the helicopters and drones for nefarious purposes.

Communication and Coordination

The various departments and organizations involved with the Sign, such as Recreation and Parks, Park Rangers, LAPD, LAFD and the Trust, lack coordinated communication and responsibilities. Not only does this exacerbate problems, it prevents them from being fully addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Increased Security & Enforcement

The most heavily visited areas below the Sign need consistent and constant oversight by Park Rangers. This would include but is not limited to Lake Hollywood Park, Mulholland Highway vista points, the Innsdale Trail and the Deronda entrance to the Park. Rangers should enforce laws against smoking, illegal parking, moving violations and criminal activity. Beyond that, LADOT should provide traffic management and parking enforcement. While an enhanced security presence does not reduce the overall number of vehicles visiting the area, permanent enforcement can be very effective in managing the negative impacts of congestion and violations of the law.

A number of eligible streets in the Beachwood Canyon area remain undesignated for Red Flag days, including Deronda, Rockcliff, Rodgerton, Woodhaven and Belden Drives. Additional signs for Red Flag designation are critical for these streets in a fire emergency.

Assignment of permanent LADOT personnel to the Hollywood Sign vicinity is long overdue. Consistent management of traffic will ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors and residents by keeping roads open and traffic moving, especially for first responders.

Turning away slow moving and overweight tour buses that illegally access the area and block traffic at photo vistas is also vital to ensuring public safety.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Ranger Substation

The installation of a permanent ranger station at Lake Hollywood Park would ensure consistent law enforcement and security for an area that attracts thousands of visitors daily. The closest Ranger station is located 25 minutes away at Crystal Springs.

Bathrooms

The Hollywood Sign stands alone as the only world-renowned monument without a public restroom. Lake Hollywood Park would provide an ideal location because it already has utility connections. Otherwise, the closest facilities are the portable toilets on the walking path around Lake Hollywood, more than a mile away from Lake Hollywood Park.

Roads and Signage

Poor maintenance of neighborhood streets contributes to increasing rates of congestion and vehicle accidents. Many of the road surfaces are cracked and potholed. Crosswalks are non-existent for thousands of visitors accessing the vista points. Street signs are

missing. Limit lines are faded. Overgrown foliage covers STOP signs. Dirt, gravel, and rocks slough onto the roads from hillsides, further restricting already narrow roadways. Sidewalks are largely non-existent in the area. The City must boost its investment in maintaining neighborhood streets to ensure the safety of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Mulholland Hwy. between Durand Dr. and Ledgewood Dr. is a bi-level road that has two- way traffic on the upper level and one-way traffic on the lower level. The upper level and the fenced area of Mulholland Hwy are heavily used by pedestrians, especially the portion between Innsdale Trail and Ledgewood. The Committee recommends the City conduct a traffic study of Mulholland Hwy. focusing on pedestrian safety.

Parking

Paid parking, as found at Griffith Observatory, should be adopted on both sides of the street adjacent to Lake Hollywood Park. Currently the parking adjacent to the park is free.

The Beachwood Canyon Preferred Parking District should be extended west to include Lake Hollywood Estates. Also, unpermitted areas in upper Beachwood Canyon such as Lower Deronda Drive should be included.

Other considerations might include reservation parking, handicapped spaces, rideshare drop-off locations and bike racks.

Turnaround

Lake Hollywood Park is accessed by a two-lane road with parking on both sides. Without a designated place to turn around, most drivers attempt a multi-point turnaround in the road, which often contributes to the road blockages. A designated turnaround could be built at the vista on Canyon Lake Drive and Mulholland Highway, which is flat and spacious.

Passenger Loading Zones

Designated passenger loading zones should be created for visitors arriving via rideshare vehicles, also handicapped parking spaces should be created near Lake Hollywood Park.

Fencing

Fencing is needed in various neighborhood locations to protect wildlife corridors, to prevent drivers from stopping in red-zoned areas or to photograph the sign, to provide closure of public areas after dark, and to protect residents from intruders.

Areas that would benefit from fencing include:

- Mulholland Hwy west of Durand Drive
- Canyon Lake Drive across from Lake Hollywood Park – CD4 will be providing shortly

In 2018, Recreation and Parks installed green-screened chain link fencing along Mulholland Highway (between the Lake Hollywood vista and Durand Dr.) to block the street view of the Sign and reduce visitor vehicles stopping to photograph the Sign.

This solution worked: there are no longer traffic blockages along this stretch of Mulholland Highway. However, this temporary fence continues to deteriorate both from the weather and from visitors cutting and defacing it. Now it poses a liability due to the temporary nature of its construction as it can fall onto vehicles and pedestrians in windy weather. The fence extends the entire length of the road, but the Sign can only be seen from a few specific sections. Only these particular sections should be addressed with permanent structures that block the sign from view so that drivers do not unsafely stop in the red zone on Mulholland Highway.

Gating/Barriers

The short, dead-end stretch of Mulholland Hwy, just north of Ledgewood Dr. is commonly referred to as Dirt Mulholland. Located immediately below the Sign, it is a tourist magnet. This portion of Mulholland is particularly difficult to navigate and does not have a navigable turnaround. Traffic on this road and at the intersection at Ledgewood and Mulholland becomes so congested that LADOT and LAPD are frequently called to clear it. Temporary barriers placed by the residents at the intersection have been effective in relieving the congestion on Dirt Mulholland. Similar to the Runyon Park north entrance, permanently gating this portion of the road in a manner that permits pedestrians and cyclists but restricts unauthorized vehicles would ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for residents and visitors.

SMOKING AND FIRE PREVENTION

The entire area below the Sign is classified as a Very High Fire Severity Zone. Fire is the neighborhoods' most pressing concern. Visitors unaware of the area-wide smoking prohibition are often seen smoking in their cars or while walking the streets. More anti-smoking signs, visitor education and strict enforcement are necessary elements for reducing the risk of fire.

The Committee recommends that Google Maps and all other GPS services depict the hillsides with red cross hatching and include the words **VERY HIGH FIRE SEVERITY ZONES – NO SMOKING ALLOWED**.

The neighborhood below the Sign once benefitted from two large, solar powered Variable Message Signs stating **NO SMOKING**. This type of signage should be returned to the area.

A permanently manned Park Ranger station in the Hills, mentioned earlier, would result in constant, consistent enforcement and would help eliminate the danger from smoking and other fire hazards.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES

Reducing traffic volume with alternative transportation modes is particularly effective when provided in conjunction with measures that make travel by private vehicle less desirable. Alternative transportation modes provide ample opportunity to educate riders about park safety, No Smoking regulations, and Hollywood history, while they generate ancillary revenue through advertising.

Several alternative transportation proposals were made to the Committee: a shuttle service, tour buses and aerial trams. Aerial Trams should not traverse the Hollywood Knolls or Beachwood/Hollywoodland neighborhoods or allow for the destruction of natural habitats. The origin and destinations for consideration should be the Sign, the MTA Red Line and Walk-of-Fame. The alternative modes would also contribute to the City carbon emission reduction goals.

Aerial Tram

The tram options explored by the City involved going over parts of Griffith Park. The LA Tourism Master Plan (2018) contains a proposal to install an overhead tram to the Hollywood Sign from multiple points, including the Warner Bros. parking lot off Forest Lawn Drive. Many meetings regarding various proposals to run the overhead tram over Griffith Park to the Hollywood Sign have consistently concluded that this is not a viable option due to expensive infrastructure requirements such as parking, platform construction, tram towers along the route, crowd management, no smoking enforcement and wildlife disruption that may be in violation of the Griffith Park Trust agreement between the Griffith family and the City of LA. The lack of viability of this option is underscored by the decision of Warner Brothers Studios to drop the project that was estimated to cost \$100 million.

Shuttle

Any public shuttle to the vistas or Lake Hollywood Park should avoid or limit use of Beachwood/Hollywoodland and Hollywood Knoll's substandard roads.

The route can start at the MTA Red Line in downtown Hollywood, stop at Hollywood Bowl or Ford parking lot, and terminate at Lake Hollywood Vista. It could exclusively use the LADWP heavy equipment road above Montlake Drive which is gated currently. The use of shuttle should only be adopted IN LIEU of allowing vehicles from visitors, not in addition, or congestion will not be reduced. Legal restrictions on outside vehicles must be explored with City Attorney.

Tour Vehicles

The Committee would like to consider the use of managed, permitted and regulated tour vehicles in lieu of individual vehicle use. Adding tour vehicles to the number of vehicles currently coming into the area substantially increases grid-lock and safety hazards.

Tour vehicle would need to be monitored to make sure they are not over the 6,000-pound limit.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is currently the main driver of visitors to the area beneath the Sign. Tighter information control of social media is important to counter the abundance of misinformation, like directions to false trails, parking at night in tow away zones, etc. An advertising campaign funded by the City, Tourism Bureau or the Chamber could direct people interested in visiting the sign to areas better suited to large numbers of tourists.

NO-FLY ZONE

The draw of the Hollywood Sign extends to those wishing to see it by helicopter and private plane. Many tour helicopters fly level with the Sign at great nuisance to both the residents and visitors just below. Additionally, and despite selected no-fly areas, aviators often fly close to the Sign in private planes. Beyond that, the Sign is a popular destination for drone pilots. While the buzz of overhead drones is annoying, the shared airspace with helicopters and planes makes the situation dangerous, notwithstanding all this is happening right above a Very High Fire Severity Zone.

An extended no-fly zone should be established around Mt. Lee, covering the Sign, the communication towers and emergency helipad, and the airspace above the most popular vistas. The restrictions should apply to drones, fixed wing aircraft and helicopters, excluding LAFD and LAPD.

AREA CLOSURES and RESTRICTIONS

Similar to the neighborhoods around the Hollywood Bowl, when parking and roadways are heavily congested the area of Beachwood to Barham could be managed by using blockades and police cadets for enforcement, allowing residents and guests entrance but closed to others.

Landscaping the Vistas above Lake Hollywood Park has been considered for the purpose of closing the areas to visitors who go there to photograph the Sign. However, the result of this closure would be that the crowds would relocate to Lake Hollywood Park, Dirt Mulholland and Lake Hollywood Estates. The congestion and crowds throughout the area would continue unabated.

The Beachwood Gate closure in 2017 into Griffith Park is recognized to have driven more traffic and visitors into Lake Hollywood and The Oaks area. At this time there are no problems to resolve at the Beachwood gate due to the gate's closure and any discussion of potential problems that would occur if the gates were reopened would be speculative at this time. If any actions were to be taken to reopen the gates, then all issues would need to be reviewed at that time including preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.

Another remedy that could reduce the dangerously high traffic volumes would be to install gates at the entrances to the area from Beachwood Drive to Barham Blvd. They would be open only to residents, their guests, public shuttles and pedestrians or cyclists. This way traffic would be managed and tourists and LA residents can access the area to hike or take selfies. No other method will be able to manage the increased crowds being experienced now and when the World Cup and Olympics take place in LA. The legality of public street gate closures would need to be explored with the City Attorney and possibly the California Attorney General.

An alternative to shutting down the Barham entrance would be to shut down access at the Lake Hollywood Drive/Montlake Drive, Tahoe Drive/Montlake Drive intersections where there is room for a turnaround. This latter approach recognizes that the Hollywood Reservoir is a popular location for walking and there is substantial street parking on Lake Hollywood Drive that does not impede access to residential properties.

Park Rangers at Yosemite Park, another park that has suffered from dangerous traffic volumes, closely monitor the traffic situation and shut down the area to non-resident vehicles when a saturation point is reached. This method has been adopted sporadically in Griffith Park when parking lots are full at Fern Dell and Crystal Springs and should be considered for the Lake Hollywood & Hollywoodland areas.

VISITOR CENTER

A dedicated visitor center near the Walk of Fame with a good view of the Sign and pleasing photo opportunities could divert a significant portion of Sign seekers from driving up to neighborhood vistas. The idea is not new and many stakeholders seem interested, yet to date no action has been taken. We encourage the relevant bodies, such as the Los Angeles Tourist and Convention Bureau and Hollywood Chamber of Commerce to build a world- class visitor center with Hollywood Sign views.

DISASTER PREPARATION

Narrow hillside roads and limited routes for egress within a Very High Fire Severity Zone call for a customized, interagency emergency protocol specifically for this area. A history of fires in this crowded area adds to the urgent need to protect both residents and visitors.

There are no published plans on managing the neighborhoods below the Sign during an emergency, whether due to fire, earthquake or terrorist activities. Mt. Lee serves as a base for significant fire, police, and civil defense communication sites. If the Lake Hollywood Park area is to remain as a viewpoint for the Hollywood Sign, it is imperative that a disaster preparedness plan be drawn up for the safety of all residents and visitors.

This will be particularly relevant as Los Angeles gets ready for upcoming World Cup and Olympics events.

LIGHTING THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN

The nocturnal lighting of the Sign has been controversial because of the crowds it attracts. In spite of neighborhood resistance and environmental concern about the effects on wildlife, the Chamber has indicated an intention to light the Sign for commercial purposes. Currently, there are no procedures or protocols for illumination of the Sign. Ownership and control of the sign is unclear. It is hard to tell which official is authorized to permit lighting or who should benefit from the revenues generated from lighting the Sign.

Lighting the Sign only increases its visibility and popularity. Lighting the Sign often will encourage sign visitation at night, which magnifies all the hazards described earlier in this report. If the Sign is to be lit, it should be limited and rare. We also encourage the City and Chamber to share revenues from illumination with the neighborhoods for security and safety purposes. Clear protocols and support of the neighborhood must be defined before any lighting can happen.

Also, lighting the Sign has an impact on wildlife, especially birds. The Sign is in Griffith Park and lighting it should be guided by the Griffith Park Vision Plan developed in 2013.

New lighting and lighting pollution must be minimized. Reducing anthropogenic influence of light pollution on wildlife can impact almost 300 species of birds.

This Committee suggests the creation of an Environmental Impact Report to understand impact to local wildlife from nighttime illumination of the Sign.

HOLLYWOOD SIGN MANAGEMENT

The management of the Hollywood Sign is severely bifurcated between the Sign Trust and the City, and needs revision. There are several proposals to remedy this as follows.

The Committee recommends that RAP pursue a concessionaire's agreement for the land that sits under the Sign to recover costs of having to maintain the areas below the Sign. Currently, the Sign Trust makes no contribution towards this end. Representatives from Hollywoodland and Lake Hollywood should be included on the Hollywood Sign Trust Board of Trustees specifically so that the Trust's responsibility is inclusive of the residents who are most impacted by the Sign's visitor traffic.

The Chamber has disproportionate control over the Sign Trust and has shown to be insensitive to the residents of the areas surrounding the Sign. Meetings have been held with the Chamber and the Trust with community leaders including Sheila Irani and George Skarpelos, both previous Presidents of HUNC, but the claim of lack of funding has prevented any assistance to be provided to the neighborhood. The fact that many members of the Sign Trust are also members of the Chamber and all but 2 of the 9 Trustees were selected by the Chamber means that their allegiance is not to the Park or residents' interests, but rather the business interests of the tourism industry. This is a conflict of interest. We are hopeful that the new leadership of the Trust and Chamber will be open to the recommendations found in this report and a constructive dialogue with funded solutions will ensue.

Since 1991, the agreement (Stipulation) between the City and Hollywood Chamber of Commerce limits the financial allocation to the Sign Trust to a maximum of \$150,000 to be used exclusively for the Sign's security and maintenance. This agreement has no cost of living clause, and has been capped at \$150,000 for over 30 years. This committee recommends that the \$150,000 cap be dropped and 30% of licensing revenues to the Chamber be retained and distributed to the Sign Trust. This will allow escalating security and maintenance costs to be covered appropriately, just as licensing revenues increase over time. The Sign Trust should then dedicate some of their funds on the security and maintenance needs of the surrounding communities that are negatively impacted by the volume of Sign visitors. Additionally, the licensing revenues raised by the Chamber should be open to City audit and available to the public.

IN SUMMARY: WHERE'S THE MONEY?

The Hollywood Sign is an accidental international icon. Other icons like Paris's Eiffel Tower, New York's Statue of Liberty and South Dakota's Mt. Rushmore were designed to accommodate and welcome admiring visitors from all over the world. The Hollywood Sign, conceived as a temporary advertising device a hundred years ago, gained its icon status as it silently kept watch over the decades-long boom of America's entertainment industry. There was no plan for visitors and no infrastructure to support high volumes of visitors.

This report details the consequences of living beneath the Hollywood Sign. Lack of planning, lack of coherent management, insufficient and decaying infrastructure make living with or visiting the Sign a taxing experience for everyone.

The Sign generates monumental funds for both the City that benefits from the tourist dollars of 50+ million visitors a year and for the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, which profits from the Sign's copyrights and trademarks. But none of that money is set aside to deal with the consequences of all those visitors to the neighborhoods beneath the sign.

Crumbling roads, chronic traffic snarls, fire hazards in an officially designated Very High Fire Severity Zone and a host of other issues are patiently listened to by empathetic City officials who have the will but lack the power or the money to help. The Hollywood Sign is a key component of our City's appeal to tourists that annually contribute over \$30 billion dollars to the city's economy, including hotel, sales and vehicle rental taxes.

The specific recommendations of this report are rooted in decades of local experience by all the residential groups that neighbor the Sign. This includes Hollywoodland, Beachwood Canyon, and Lake Hollywood Estates. Each solution requires significant ongoing investment from the City, especially in light of the growth in tourism from the upcoming World Cup and Olympics. We recommend the City provide analysis of the costs of implementing the solutions proposed in this report in the interest of determining how a reasonable portion of this revenue can be allocated to address these issues and ensure a long life for our local icon.

The Hollywood United Neighborhood Council celebrates the special significance of the Sign along with the creativity and passion the Sign inspires around the world. However, we believe the City must support the community in providing equitable and well-managed access to the Sign so all stakeholders in this community can look up and remain inspired instead of seeing a source of frustration and division.

The Estate of George Abrahams

General Administrators

Jen Getz & Kay Tornborg

(818) 448.5206

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January 9, 2023

Via Email: HHA@Hollywoodland.org

Re: HUNC Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee Draft Report

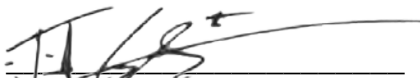
To whom it may concern:

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment was established specifically, “to promote more citizen participation in government and **make government more responsive to local needs**” (Charter Code sec 900). The purpose of the Neighborhood Council (“NC”) is to act as “an advisory role on issues of concern to the neighborhood” (Charter Code sec 900). It is therefore paramount, that the “recommendations” made by the NC are a true and accurate reflection of what the residents of the neighborhood have brought to your attention.

Residents of Hollywoodland have consistently reported the various issues related to the City’s failure to go through the required legal protocols in order to consider the surplus of environmental impacts these proposals insert into Hollywoodland. This, should be a warning to our NC and set off the alarm to cease from entertaining any further proposals or considerations until and unless this is properly addressed.

As to your Draft, brazenly titled “A Report from the Neighborhoods Beneath the Hollywood Sign”: I work in this neighborhood on a daily basis and am unaware of “reporting” my concerns to the NC. Claiming you are providing a report from my neighborhood is not reporting truth. Second to this, it would be a false representation for our own NC to represent anything other than Hollywoodland’s **fierce opposition to any “recommendations”** that are totally out of alignment with what residents of the neighborhood have been expressing. We can’t even get daily leaf blower violations enforced. Presenting residents another stack of proposed “recommendations” for the City to take action on in order for **them** to profit from, is not well received. Are the “recommendations” outlined in your report intended to be in response to the alleged “EVER-INCREASING POPULARITY” of the sign? If so, what is this based on? What statistics are you relying on? These are just a few questions that must be answered and why there are a series of steps required including something called an Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”). Failing to collect this information leaves you with no solid data or facts that would support how these decisions do not negatively impact the area, local wildlife, and the shred of natural habitat that remains. There are also safety concerns that accompany each of your “recommendations” that go unmentioned. All of that said, it is difficult to move past the title of your draft when you have falsely taken ownership of our neighborhoods voices.

There is no evidence that shows the city has or is addressing the long list of issues the Hollywoodland residents have repeatedly brought to their attention. They go ignored. Making any recommendations to the city as to how they best can profit by further injecting insensitive tourists into the neighborhoods is not at the top of the list. The “recommendations” you are proposing should be in the jurisdiction of the **local** residents and community. At minimum, let the record reflect the NC failed to include the voices of the people residing in the neighborhoods from which they claim their report originates.


Jen Getz


Kay Tornborg



robert@myhunc.org

From: Hollywoodland Homeowners Association <HHA@hollywoodland.org>
Sent: Monday, January 9, 2023 8:31 AM
To: hunc@empowerla.org; mayor.bass@lacity.org
Cc: secretary@myhunc.org; president@myhunc.org; elise.ruden@lacity.org;
Ethan.weaver@lacity.org; nithya.raman@lacity.org; cityatty.help@lacity.org;
mayor.helpdesk@lacity.org
Subject: Fwd: HUNC Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Crosby Doe <crosby@crosbydoe.com>
Date: Sat, Jan 7, 2023 at 8:06 PM
Subject: HUNC Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee
To: <HHA@hollywoodland.org>

Dear Hollywoodland Homeowners Association: Thank you for helping to expose this Wolf in Sheep's clothing! The recommendations you have shed light on in the HUNC report are not mitigations to an already huge problem, but rather proposals to attract, and accommodate even more tourism at the expense of our Historic Hollywoodland, and our local wildlife. The attempt of the Report to blame the problems we are experiencing solely on GPS, [etc.is](#) a Red Herring. The City put the illegal vista site at Mulholland Highway and Canyon Lake on their free maps of Griffith Park to guide millions of tourists to the location even before they graded the north side of the street to expand and create "a place to go see the Hollywood Sign", AND they have been promoting the site ever since. It seems clear that to the City of Los Angeles tourism dollars trump safety & sanity. Please pass this on as my objection to claims of local support in the report Thank you again. Crosby Doe

From: George Abbott Clark <gclark8505@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2023 9:32 AM
To: robert@myhunc.org
Subject: Lighting the sign and wildlife

Hi HUNC (Robert and Jim),

I listened to, but did not speak at, the 1/923 zoom meeting re: the Sign and tourism/crowd issues.

The thoughtful report had some good suggestions. Thank you for your hard work.

But one person during the comment period said lighting the Sign at night was not a wildlife issue. I think his house was used for the BET event.

He said only the letters would be illuminated. And there was no ambient light to disturb wildlife.

I am a PhD evolutionary biologist, conservationist, and know the issue of light pollution on nature.

Lighting just the Sign's letters IS the problem for wildlife, *not* the ambient light.

The light on the huge letters is what would attract and disturb the wildlife.

Indeed, tall buildings in cities whose windows are high up away from all the ambient light below kill thousands of migrating birds each year. Not the the lit up city below.

Deer, raccoons, skunks, possum, fox and other animals all would be attracted to the lit up letters and detrimentally disturb their normal behavior. Even insects.

This is not up for debate. This is scientific fact.

Of course the lit up sign would also attract people at night also disturbing animals, especially nocturnal, ones, that need a respite from the crowds.

So, it's double whammy against nature.

Regardless of the increased traffic, noise, and fire danger at night - added on top of the daytime nightmare - the wildlife issues at night still stand up regardless of what this homeowner "thinks."

So, please do not repeat his factually ignorant claim.

Any typos are spellcheck.

Sincerely,

George Abbott Clark
gclark8505@gmail.com
Cell: (323)383-7836
Skype: georgeabbottclark



http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0163967/?ref_=nv_sr_1



<https://www.gacproductions.net>



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/george-abbott-clark-94b02327/>



<https://www.instagram.com/georgeabbottclark/>

From: Official Hollywoodland Homeowners Association eMail
<hha+hollywoodland.org@ccsend.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2023 8:22 AM
To: hunc@empowerla.org
Subject: ○ HOLLYWOOD Sign + Rec and Parks ○ We need Help!



HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION est. 1942

9 March 2023

Dear City Leaders:

Below is the mission, vision and motto statements posted on RAP's current website. There is nothing discussing tourism, sign promotion or accommodating corporate sponsors from the entertainment industry. There is however, clear regard and purpose for the residents and environment. We do know there has been significant interference among politicians like the previous mayor who had a stronghold on the previous GM to light the sign just a few days before he submitted his retirement. That is not how proper process within the city charter operates. That said, please understand and hear concerns over the folks who have lost their way in the process and are attempting to manipulate the charge of RAP and the honor of the good citizens and their private properties.

Mission Statement RAP

Our mission is to enrich the lives of the residents of Los Angeles by providing safe, welcoming parks and recreation facilities and affordable, diverse recreation and human services activities for people of all ages to play, learn, contemplate, build community and be good stewards of our environment.

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide affordable recreational, physical and cultural opportunities for all of Los Angeles residents, with a focus on families, youth development and building healthy communities. The programs and services offered by the Department will provide excellent value and quality and emphasize the equitable distribution of resources throughout the City. We will offer these programs in safe, attractive and well-maintained facilities that will reflect the public's needs and interests.

Our Motto

We build healthy communities through people, parks and programs.

Hollywoodland Tract, Our History, Our Land

As a one hundred year old neighborhood we have collected, digitized and organized materials that have supported our mission of protection, safety, quality of life for our property owners and their families. We have been concerned about the open space

surrounding our tract since our inception, so much so that in 1942 we had our own fire truck and volunteer fire team protecting homes and the open space. Unlike other communities we are immersed inside the open space of tract 6450. That 444 acre space was given to the city in 1944 along with the namesake Hollywoodland sign. Three private parcels with ingress/ egress easements were also identified within that openspace . Those easements and two private parcels exist today.

Comments/ Suggestions/Recommendations “Living with an Icon “

There have been many attempts over the last twenty (20)years to sort and understand issues relating to the sign and associated problems.

Facts:

The Hollywood sign and the land it rests on is owned by the city of Los Angeles RAP department. It was given in 1944 by the Sherman Company. A three year city contract was given to the Hollywood Chamber that lapsed in 1951. No contract or concessionaire's agreement exists today.

The Chamber owns the service mark for the visual image of the word Hollywood. Lake Hollywood Park is a pocket park dedicated for the primary use of the local residents. It rests on the original land from the Hollywoodland tract. Canyon Lake Drive was created to access Lake Hollywood Estates and was developed on park land. I can not find any city files indicating this is a public road. That said, it is assumed it remains a park road since the roadway was created on park property.

There are no official, legal openings into the open space from Hollywoodland residential. The bootlegged LaBonge /FOGP promoted easement road access has been litigated with a judgement in favor of the Sunset Ranch to protect their easement property rights. It is not a public entrance. The only official opening into tract 6450 open space is from Canyon Drive in Bronson canyon adjacent to the Oaks neighborhood.

The Chamber, Sign Trust have no authority to administer the sign or its' use. The Trust has authority for contributing a designated amount of funds to maintain the sign. This was determined in the 1990's after the AG investigated and agreed the Chamber misappropriated sign trust funds and public trust.

It is unknown who provides liability insurance for the Hollywood sign.

A right of entry to the sign needs RAP clearance if non RAP/ city people enter that space.

A monetary use fee can and should be charged for non city personnel.

Neither the overlook or vista off Canyon Lake Drive have authority or paperwork/ budget indicating they have been legally installed.

In 2014 a council candidate, Tomas OGrady briefly studied the conditions and issues relating to the excessive traffic tourist, hiking issue. He developed an outline for a resolution along with details for environmental plantings etc. His plan was ignored. Under the last council administration a Ford Theater hiker trail was created with the idea of providing an alternate hiking trail to view the sign. Money was spend and no resolve of the issue occurred. It is currently not being promoted as an alternative use for sightseeing/ hiking to the sign.

Management and enforcement of existing laws on the books go unheeded (DOT, RAP, quality of life, sanitation, fire,) This report concurred with that.

Authorities need to stop marketing and start managing understanding the geography, infrastructure comprehensively. We have no idea how many people also use the reservoir or wisdom tree, no idea how many people come here and their purpose.

We recommend the City obtain the following information/facts so quantifiable actions can be made:

How much money has been allocated to DOT to attempt to address the traffic related problems?
What are the high use days, what is the average DOT cost, LAPD cost, LAFD Cost, RAP?
Has any of the money proved effective?
What is the measurement of effectiveness?
Establish a budget based on effective government allocation of funding.
Measure awareness and use of the sign promotion. There are advertising resources that measure awareness (translate it into use).
How often is the sign used annually?
What are the product translation costs, the translation cost put back on the adjacent communities and the costs to the city.
Identify high use days, project high use days and elements that trigger high use. Identify costs to effectively control a safe environment high use days.
How has good planning practices per the Hollywood Community Plan been adhered to?
Has it been helpful to preserve community and environment?
Transfer liability to promoters of the sign with legal , binding contracts.
Install cams at problem hot spots that has retrievable data accessible to LAPD, RAP.
Data should be used to create meaningful, applicable solutions/ actions particularly in scheduling, resource allocation etc.

Responsibility of this space is RAPs, not the chamber, not the mayor, not the tourist board. RAP has the final say in its management, per city charter. The council's role is to follow the lead of RAP, to administer public safety and assure protection for citizens and private property.

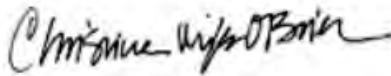
Does RAP want to support their mission or support the promotion of the chamber's marketing and the tourist trade?

If RAP supports its mission the following are not needed:

Handicap parking, ride share, drop off, signage, turnaround, paid parking, restrooms, public shuttles, sign lighting and the infiltration of the chamber and trust.

We look forward to your response and actions.

Sincerely,



Christine Mills O'Brien, President
Hollywoodland Homeowners Association


Hollywoodland Homeowners Association | 2700 N. Beachwood Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90068
hha@hollywoodland.org

[Unsubscribe hunc@empowerla.org](mailto:hunc@empowerla.org)


[Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by hha@hollywoodland.org in collaboration with



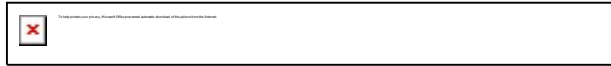
From: Hollywoodland Homeowners Association <HHA@hollywoodland.org>
Sent: Monday, January 9, 2023 8:35 AM
To: hunc@empowerla.org
Cc: secretary@myhunc.org; elise.ruden@lacity.org; cityatty.help@lacity.org; nithya.raman@lacity.org; president@myhunc.org; Ethan.weaver@lacity.org; mayor.bass@lacity.org; mayor.helpdesk@lacity.org
Subject: Fwd:  An urgent message for Dave from the HHA!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Dave Thomas <dave@peoplemerge.com>
Date: Sat, Jan 7, 2023 at 8:54 PM
Subject: Re:  An urgent message for Dave from the HHA!
To: <hha@hollywoodland.org>

I'm totally against this city behavior, I'd like my vote to mean something. My wife, our three kids under 5, and two dogs like to walk in our neighborhood safely and without tour buses and further traffic from tourist exploitation.

On Sat, Jan 7, 2023 at 7:05 PM Official Hollywoodland Homeowners Association eMail <hha@hollywoodland.org> wrote:



Urgent Hollywoodland Homeowner Alert

Hollywood United Neighborhood Council
Draft Report Recommends and Claims Your Support

Dear Hollywoodland Homeowners:

The City of Los Angeles' actions to promote and develop tourist destinations within and contiguous to Hollywoodland have already created significant adverse impacts in Hollywoodland.

The Draft Report from HUNC's Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee, which is going to be presented and voted on this coming Monday, recommends further development as noted below. The

report claims your support of these Ad Hoc Committee's "recommendations":

- 1 Permanent Bathroom Facilities at Lake Hollywood Park
- 2 A Ranger Station (read Visitor Information Center) at Lake Hollywood Park
- 3 A vehicle turnaround (roundabout), the Mulholland Highway/Durand View Site, which the City developed without Environmental Review.
4. Tourist Shuttles through Hollywoodland.
5. Revenue generating Parking Meters at View Site/Lake Hollywood Park.
6. Appeal to the City of Los Angeles to overturn the closure of the gate at the end of Beachwood Drive.

THE HAA STRONGLY DISAGREES WITH THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

For years the city has been illegally developing the view site at Lake Hollywood Park without environmental review, or consideration to safety, traffic, noise pollution, gridlock, pedestrians, wildlife and adverse impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods (Witness Garcetti's recent failed effort to light the Hollywood Sign). The Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee is claiming YOUR support of the above recommendations. We urge you to attend the zoom meeting on Monday, and let your concerns be known to HUNC.

Monday, January 9, 2023 6:30 PM

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Webinar ID: 828 3698 1526

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82836981526>

Call in number dial 1 (669) 900-6833

[Meeting Agenda Link](#)

[Read the HUNC Hollywood Sign Ad Hoc Committee Draft Report here](#)

[Read the HHA response to the report here](#)

[Read our HHA Policy here](#)

If you are unable to attend this important meeting, please email us at HHA@Hollywoodland.org with your comments and we will make sure they are presented to the full HUNC Board.

Please help our voice to be heard by attending Monday.

Please join the HHA



Hollywoodland Homeowners Association | [2700 N. Beachwood Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90068](#)

[Unsubscribe dave@peoplemerge.com](#)

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Sent by hha@hollywoodland.org in collaboration with



Try email marketing for free today!



Friends of Griffith Park

P.O. Box 27573

Los Angeles, CA 90027-0573

friendsofgriffithpark.org

March 3, 2023

Robert Morrison, President
Hollywood United Neighborhood Council (HUNC)
(via email only)

Re: “Living with an Icon” HUNC Ad Hoc Committee Report

Dear HUNC board members,

Friends of Griffith Park (FoGP) is a non-profit organization with a mission rooted in advocacy and service, with priorities to better manage and sustain the Park’s rich biodiversity and history. We commend the Hollywood United Neighbor Council’s Ad Hoc committee for tackling the difficult issues relating to Hollywood Sign traffic and the increased number of visitors in neighborhoods adjoining Griffith Park.

We support many of the suggestions in the Report for making the experience better for residents and visitors alike. We offer this letter with the hope this HUNC board-approved Report is supplemented with FoGP’s comment letter, as well as that of others from the community. Our letter should be included as part of the public record for this issue.

Below, we show strong support for several important initiatives, and suggest the addition of a crucial missing element regarding public access to the Hollyridge Trailhead. We finally offer comment on eight specific areas of content within the Report.

Our Support:

- 1) A Ranger Substation in the vast western part of the Park is long overdue. Griffith Park personnel travel long distances for emergencies since they are generally dispatched from the Crystal Springs Ranger Station. A second station could also provide important information for Park patrons not currently available.
- 2) The Report generally opposes the lighting of the Hollywood Sign. FoGP also supports this position as it minimizes the impacts to wildlife, such as disorientation of nocturnal species and disruption of mating, feeding, migrating, and the predator-prey balance. *A Vision for Griffith Park* adds support for this conclusion, along with the growing list of published science. We cannot condone “limited and rare” lighting of the Sign (*page 14*), regardless of the possibility of obtaining large revenues.
- 3) We strongly support a Hollywood Visitor Center in Hollywood, close to Metro Stations, preferably with a view of the Hollywood Sign. This center should function as a staging location for Sign visitors to board electric shuttles in order to reduce vehicles driving into neighborhoods,

an opportunity for photos and a comprehensive visitor's information center. The Report only states the center's purpose is a place for photos.

4) Many within this community know that FoGP led the extensive citywide opposition to the proposed Stantec Study alignments for an "Aerial Transit System" traversing the wildlands of Griffith Park. We stand solid on this position, as does HUNC.

More Work Needed:

Page 14: *"The Beachwood Gate closure in 2017 into Griffith Park is recognized to have driven more traffic and visitors into Lake Hollywood and The Oaks area. At this time there are no problems to resolve at the Beachwood gate due to the gate's closure and any discussion of potential problems that would occur if the gates were reopened would be speculative at this time. If any actions were to be taken to reopen the gates, then all issues would need to be reviewed at that time including preparation of an Environmental Impact Report."*

The Report obfuscates the fact that ending the longstanding pedestrian access to the Hollyridge Trailhead from Beachwood Canyon was a significant cause of the problems that the Report itself addresses. It also offers no recommendations regarding the loss of this public access which previously accommodated many visitors.

We disagree that there are "no problems to resolve" since the gate is closed. FoGP supports public access to the Park from multiple locations. The closure of the Hollyridge Trailhead access via Beachwood Drive is especially troublesome since this access offered the best public transit solution for accessing the Park, with DASH operating to Beachwood Village, very close to this access point.

It is well known that the City's interpretation of a court decision in 2017 led to the permanent closure of access to Griffith Park from Beachwood Drive. The judge in the *Sunset Ranch v. City* case **did not** order the closure. Rather, the City, in part, prevailed in the judgment which stated that: "members of the public cannot be excluded from using the easement" road north of the Beachwood gate and ordered that the City "provide public pedestrian access to the Hollyridge Trail at a location as closest to" the gate "or at the pre-2001 access point (from Hollyridge Drive) as is practicable." (*Sunset Ranch Hollywood Stables v. City of Los Angeles* lawsuit BC576506) The City chose to ignore that part of the order, kept the gate closed and stated that the nearest access point was up Bronson Canyon, 3 miles away.

FoGP, the Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust, the HUNC board, GPAB, and several homeowner organizations supported the idea of an alternative pedestrian access to the Park that complies with the court's directive, without interfering with Sunset Ranch customers on the access road. This concept should remain on the table.

The Report assumes that an EIR report would be required if access at Beachwood is again allowed. Once again, there is no documentation for this conjecture and it only serves to quash discussion of this important issue.

We suggest that HUNC, instead, recommends that the City explore ways to re-open Beachwood access to Griffith Park consistent with the court's ruling in the *Sunset Ranch Hollywood Stables v. City of Los Angeles* lawsuit (BC576506). We believe that re-opening access to Griffith Park from Beachwood would help alleviate congestion at other access points in the western part of the Park.

Editing Comments:

Many of the following comments pertain to narratives which lack factual support. We offer these thoughts for improvements to the document. Accurate information for the public is important to avoid misunderstandings. Accurate information for our elected officials and decision-makers is the best path for action.

1) Page 4: *“Previous efforts to channel Sign visitors to more distant, nonresidential vista locations, such as the Griffith Observatory and the Hollywood Highland shopping center were ineffective at reducing the number of vehicles visiting the neighborhoods. Those more distant alternatives never caught on.”*

Comment: What evidence substantiates this? Contrary to what is stated, the Griffith Observatory recorded huge increases in visitors during the time it was promoted by the City as a way to view the Hollywood Sign. Available data should correct any claim that this alternative vista area “never caught on.” It should also be noted that access to the Griffith Observatory, too, is through residential neighborhoods, not unlike the Lake Hollywood Park Vista.

2) Page 7: *Neighborhoods below the Sign and Griffith Park have a documented history of fires caused by careless smoking, fireworks, arson and homeless encampments.*

Comment: L.A. City Park Ranger fire data does not validate greater fire incidents below the Sign versus other areas of the Park. City Park Rangers have maintained fire records beginning in 2016. One fire is reported, 0.25 acres, at Lake Hollywood/Canyon Lake on November 25, 2017. A second at Deronda Gate, 0.25 acres, occurred on June 25, 2019. No other fires in the entire area west of Fern Dell and south of Cahuenga Peaks have been reported for years 2016 through 2022.

In summary, 2 fires and 0.50 acres burned below the Sign versus the 82 fires and 198 total acres burned in Griffith Park during the seven years of recorded data. In contrast to the Hollywood Sign area, the Griffith Observatory area (between Western Canyon/Fern Dell and Vermont Canyon) recorded 27 fires and 33.5 burned acres in the same time period.

FoGP is highly motivated and active in reducing fire hazards, but sees no alarming trends in this western area of the Park over other areas.

3) Page 5: *“Additionally, the Sign and surrounding neighborhoods are in a Very High Fire Severity Zone, exponentially magnifying the danger.”*

Comment: Along the same lines as brush fire statistics, the Very High Fire Severity Zone (VHFSZ) does not set “the Sign and surrounding neighborhoods” apart from others as more dangerous. VHFSZ, under LAFD’s authority, applies to nearly all of the Santa Monica Mountains residential areas, and extends to Elysian Park, Mt. Washington and many other foothill residential areas. The VHFSZ reaches south to Hollywood and Franklin Avenue.

4) Page 14: *“The Sign is in Griffith Park and lighting it should be guided by the Griffith Park Vision Plan developed in 2013.”*

Comment: The correct citation is *A Vision for Griffith Park (adopted January, 2014)*. For better context, it was largely “developed” from 2005 through 2008 by the Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group, and later sterilized and adopted by the L.A. Department of Recreation and Park Commission.

5) Page 7: *“Atop of Mt Lee behind the Hollywood Sign, are the Homeland Security, LAPD, LAFD dispatch towers that can be a target by the helicopters and drones for nefarious purposes”.*

Comment: FoGP has participated with LA Area Helicopter Noise Coalition for more than 10 years. To our recollection, no one from FAA, law enforcement/safety helicopter divisions (including LAPD Air Support) or other helicopter operators suggested the Mt. Lee Communications Facility might be a target of an attack.

More accurately, the Mt. Lee Communications Facility has a Homeland Security rating level. The Report seems to imply that Homeland Security has a tower or presence there.

6) Page 11: *“Many meetings regarding various proposals to run the overhead tram over Griffith Park to the Hollywood Sign have consistently concluded that this is not a viable option due to expensive infrastructure requirements such as parking, platform construction, tram towers along the route, crowd management, no smoking enforcement and wildlife disruption that may be in violation of the Griffith Park Trust agreement between the Griffith family and the City of LA.”*

Comment: We do not understand the reference regarding the Griffith family. We do not know of any agreements between the Griffith Family and the City. Is the indenture at the time of donation in 1896 intended, with its reversionary conditions? The indenture predates the Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust, if it is part of the confusion.

7) Page 12: *“NO-FLY ZONE - The restrictions should apply to drones, fixed wing aircraft and helicopters excluding LAFD and LAPD.”*

Comment: The City of Los Angeles would only have jurisdiction over its own fleet, including LAFD and LAPD. FAA regulates air space, so concerns beyond the City’s fleet should be directed to our U.S. Congressional members.

8) Page 14: *“This Committee suggests the creation of an Environmental Impact Report to understand impact to local wildlife from nighttime illumination of the Sign.”*

Comment: Normally, a “project” is first declared, and then its CEQA requirement (various levels, including EIR) is determined and executed in a public process.

Conclusion:

Again, we appreciate the considerable work this Ad Hoc has done. Please note that FoGP comments are limited to parts of the Report for which FoGP has a vested interest per our mission and/or has information to share. We appreciate you receiving our comments and accepting them to supplement the public record.

Respectfully,



Gerry Hans
President

About Friends of Griffith Park:

Friends of Griffith Park (FoGP) is a California non-profit 501(c) (3) dedicated to preserving and protecting Griffith Park’s natural habitat, biodiversity, and historic features, for current and future generations. FoGP is committed to ensuring that Griffith Park, a public park and Los Angeles’ largest Historic-Cultural Monument, remain open, natural, and free to all citizens of Los Angeles.



HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION est. 1946

5 January 2023

Dear Members of the HUNC Ad Hoc Hollywood sign committee:

Thank you for collectively sharing and organizing the concerns and observations relating to the Hollywood sign. Hollywoodland Homeowners Association has reviewed your report and shares our comments and concerns on this topic.

Based on our extensive involvement with the sign and the direct impact, we have established this policy statement: <https://hollywoodland.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2HHA-Policy-Statements-Dec-22-1.pdf>

Please also note, other areas in our tract are negatively impacted by the traffic, tourist, sign marketing issues. These include the village, Beachwood Drive, Ledgewood Drive, Deronda and Rockcliff Drives.

We have retained numerous public records and correspondence, legal docs, RAP Commission docs, AG rulings etc. throughout the years. Key materials such as the sign ownership have been forwarded to the City. The sign and the land it rests on is owned by the City of Los Angeles Rec and Parks Department. The last signed agreement between the Chamber and the City lapsed in 1951. There is no concessionaire's agreement or contract in place. The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce owns the federal service mark for the word "Hollywood" and they are entitled to the revenue. The Hollywood Sign Trust's 501c3 only purpose is to maintain the sign. There is also an authorized Hollywood Sign Advisory Board still in RAP's queue that can be re-established at any point in time for advisement.

The City has ignored proper process in administering the sign which affects the SEA environment, the neighborhoods and the safety of all citizens (including issues relating to the Main Communication Tower). The sign has become a political pawn and a tool to foster favors at the whim of politicians. Until the City Charter , Hollywood Community plan, Griffith Park Vision/Master Plan and key environmental components are followed, a proper solution/criteria will not be created. We urge this committee to request RAP reinstate the Hollywood Sign Advisory Board, review all the facts and move forward on this matter. In addition, not all suggestions like developing a tourist center outside neighborhoods needs city/RAP involvement. The Chamber generates significant revenue from the service mark, has iconic Hollywood entertainment members with entertainment dollars who should be able to establish an adequate visitor center.

Sincerely
HHA

**BEN SHEFFNER
2751 HOLLYRIDGE DR.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90068**

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Hollywood United Neighborhood Council
P.O. Box 3272
Hollywood, CA 90078

January 8, 2023

Re: 2023 Draft Report from the Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee

Dear members of the HUNC board and Ad Hoc Committee on the Hollywood Sign:

I write to provide feedback on the draft report titled “Living With an Icon: A Report from the Neighborhoods Beneath the Hollywood Sign,” which was posted to the HUNC website January 6, 2023. By way of background, I have lived in Hollywoodland since 2010. The neighborhood’s proximity to Griffith Park and its hiking trails was one of the primary reasons I chose to settle here, and I have taken full advantage of this feature, walking/hiking several miles daily through the streets of Hollywoodland, lower Beachwood Canyon, The Oaks, Lake Hollywood Estates, and the western portions of Griffith Park. It’s a beautiful neighborhood, and the vast majority of the time it is completely peaceful, quiet, and traffic-free, including in the areas most visited by those seeking to view the sign. No doubt, on certain days, particularly around holidays, visits and traffic spike, but that should not obscure the fact that the problems are limited in scope, both temporally and geographically.

I want to start by thanking and commending the committee for its thoughtful and balanced approach. Most significantly, and in stark contrast to years of hysterical rhetoric from certain segments of the Hollywoodland and surrounding communities (particularly the Hollywoodland Homeowners Association, which represents only a small portion of the neighborhood’s residents¹ and has consistently exhibited extreme anti-visitor and anti-hiker sentiments), the draft report is grounded in the fundamental reality that the Hollywood Sign is here to stay, and that it will continue to attract visitors, both local residents and visitors from afar, to the surrounding neighborhoods. Rather than deny this reality, the draft report offers constructive suggestions for mitigating the impact of visits to the neighborhood. This is exactly the right approach, and the only one that stands a chance of achieving positive results. In particular, I strongly support the draft’s recommendation for: constructing public bathrooms at

¹ According to the Hollywoodland Homeowners Association Summer 2022 newsletter (page 5), there are approximately 550 homes in Hollywoodland. <https://hollywoodland.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/HHA-Newsletter-September-2022-Mailer.pdf> A February 13, 2021 email from HHA to its membership had only 69 recipients, representing about 13% of the homes in the neighborhood. To be clear: statements by the HHA should not be interpreted as expressing anything but the views of a small minority of the neighborhood’s residents.

Lake Hollywood park; maintaining the “vista” sign-viewing area on Canyon Lake Drive; constructing a permanent fence or other structure along Mulholland Highway between the “vista” and Durand Drive; installation of better signage; establishing a visitor center; and enhanced enforcement of laws against smoking and illegal parking.

Below I offer some constructive suggestions for improving the draft report, which is informed by my close observation of the neighborhood from my daily walks/hikes, my experience as an attorney (I prefer hard evidence over speculation, anecdote, and hyperbole), and my previous employment as a journalist, which taught me to focus objectively on facts and always strive for accuracy.

Page 4: The draft says, “social media has managed to infiltrate over half of the 7.84 billion people in the world.” The word “infiltrate” is inappropriate and off-putting. Social media is not an enemy; it is a tool that allows individuals to communicate with each other. It is used for both good (e.g., HUNC’s Facebook page is how I typically learn about its activities) and ill. And love it or hate it, social media is not going away. Describing social media as an “infiltrat[or]” distracts from the draft’s otherwise constructive suggestions.

Also, while I do not doubt that GPS navigation and social media have contributed to visits to the neighborhood, it bears emphasis that the practice of visiting the sign and surrounding neighborhoods for recreation and sight-seeing has existed—indeed has been encouraged—since the construction of the sign in 1923. Notably, the original real estate advertisements seeking buyers for lots in Hollywoodland in the early 1920s listed access to hiking trails as one of the neighborhood’s chief selling points. And a 1923 article in the *Los Angeles Times* made clear that the trails surrounding the neighborhood were intended from the beginning to be “open to the public” and “easily accessible” to all of city’s residents, including those “who find it impossible to take a regular vacation.”²

Page 4: The draft says, “To date, increased parking enforcement has little discernible effect on reducing the overall number of vehicles coming to the enforced areas.” I am skeptical of this and similar statements that make assertions without citing to data. To determine whether this statement is true, one would need a traffic study that measures visits to the neighborhood in relation to enforcement efforts. I do not know whether such a study exists, but the draft report would benefit from citation to reliable data wherever possible.

Page 5: The draft says, “The 100-year-old hillside roads are rapidly deteriorating under increasing visitor pressure.” No doubt, the roads—especially the concrete (as opposed to asphalt) portions—are in terrible condition. But what is the evidence that they are “rapidly deteriorating”? They were terrible when I moved here in 2010, and they seem about equally terrible now. Unless the committee has data confirming that the conditions of the roads are “rapidly deteriorating,” I suggest deleting this phrase.

Page 5: The draft says, “These congested conditions significantly hamper emergency response from fire, police, ranger, and ambulance services. Additionally, the Sign and surrounding

² *Los Angeles Times*, Hollywoodland to Have Bridle Paths: Hills Behind Tract will be Mecca for Equestrians and Hiking Enthusiasts (July 22, 1923), attached as Exhibit A.

neighborhoods are in a Very High Fire Severity Zone, exponentially magnifying the danger. Fire trucks will have difficulty reaching the fire as visitors and residents attempt to flee by car, creating bottlenecks on the narrow streets.”³ While these statements may seem logical and even obvious, LAFD leadership, who are the real experts in this area, simply disagree with such rhetoric. As LAFD officials told the Hollywood Reporter back in 2015, before the introduction of PPDs and when anti-visitor invective was at its zenith, visitors are not the cause of the fire danger, and have not reduced the ability of firefighters to respond to emergencies:

“We have talked to our field emergency responders, and they haven’t had any problems getting up there,” says Los Angeles Fire Department assistant chief John Vidovich, who implements policy related to departmental code. Battalion chief Charles Butler, who oversees the unit that works the area around the sign, elaborates that residents are partly responsible for the spatial challenges the department faces: “Those streets are narrow, but the homes there were originally built for families to have one car. Now they have multiple, and they often use their garages for storage and park on the streets. I don’t know that the tourist issue is actually a main factor. It’s a multipronged issue.”⁴

Similarly, I refer you to the very thoughtful email of Dec. 29, 2015 from LAFD official Joseph Castro, attached as Exhibit B to this letter. In this email, in which Mr. Castro was responding to a resident’s demands that LAFD restrict traffic in upper Beachwood Canyon, he explains how: 1) traffic issues are not unique to Beachwood, 2) traffic has not interfered with LAFD’s operations here; and 3) various mitigation tactics have successfully prevented any major fires in the Santa Monica Mountains for many decades. I believe LAFD officials’ views on this subject are due heavy deference, as they are more aware than anyone of the difficulties of navigating hillside neighborhoods including ours, and have successfully addressed such issues for a very long time. While we should never be complacent about fire risk, neither should we let rhetoric get ahead of the facts.

Page 5: The draft says, “Atop of Mt. Lee, behind the Hollywood Sign, are the Homeland Security, LAPD, LAFD dispatch towers that can be a target by the helicopters and drones for nefarious purposes.” While I am sympathetic to residents’ complaints about noise from helicopters and drones, the suggestion that they present some special danger to the communication towers on Mt. Lee seems inflammatory and unsupported. Helicopters and drones could theoretically “target” any landmark or building in the city, but I know of no evidence that the particular concern regarding Mt. Lee is anything other than pure speculation. Absent confirmation from knowledgeable authorities, I suggest deleting this reference.

Page 6: The draft says: “Poor maintenance of neighborhood streets contributes to increasing rates of congestion and vehicle accidents.” While I certainly agree that many of the local streets are in poor condition, I question the assertion that this “contributes to increasing rates of congestion

³ While it is true that our neighborhoods are in a Very High Fire Severity Zone, some context is in order. The VHFSZ designation covers *every hillside neighborhood in the city*; in this regard, our neighborhood is not so special. VHFSZ maps are available here: <https://www.latimes.com/projects/la-me-california-buildings-in-fire-zones/>

⁴ See Gary Baum, “War Over Hollywood Sign Pits Wealthy Residents Against Urinating Tourists: ‘One of These Days Someone Will Get Shot’,” Hollywood Reporter, Jan. 7, 2015 (available at <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/war-hollywood-sign-pits-wealthy-761385>).

and vehicle accidents.” First, is there any data to support the assertion that our neighborhood has “increasing rates of congestion and vehicle accidents”? And, assuming that accident rates are indeed increasing, is there any evidence that “[p]oor maintenance of neighborhood streets” is contributing to such increase? The report should include such statements without hard evidence to support them.

Moreover, while no one, myself included, will celebrate the cracks, heaves, bumps, potholes, badly done repairs, and other issues that plague Hollywoodland’s streets, such problems have one significant silver lining: they cause people to drive more slowly. And slower driving is probably the most effective means of enhancing safety, both for drivers and pedestrians, as it gives drivers more time to react to avoid collisions and reduces the chances of serious injury when collisions do occur.⁵ So, ironically, our streets’ sorry state may actually enhance driver and pedestrians safety. Likewise, making them smooth and free of congestion would likely result in increased vehicle speed, leading to more collisions and injuries. Again, this is not to argue against badly needed street repairs, but we should not expect better maintained streets to result in a decline in accidents; the subsequent increased speeds would likely need to be mitigated through the installation of traffic-calming measures.

Page 9: The drafts says that a shuttle “could exclusively use the LADWP heavy equipment road above Montlake Drive which is gated currently.” It is unclear how a shuttle that takes people to the vistas or Lake Hollywood Park could avoid Canyon Lake Drive. The description here would benefit from additional detail and explanation.

Page 10: The draft states, “Tighter information control of social media is important to counter the abundance of misinformation, like directions to false trails, parking at night in tow away zones, etc.” While it is not clear exactly what “[t]ighter information control of social media” means here, as a First Amendment attorney this phrase made me shudder. The First Amendment bars the government from exercising “information control” over social media, even when it carries “misinformation,” and any attempt by HUNC or others to get the city or other entities to exercise such control would fail. I urge the committee to delete this sentence. (The subsequent recommendation that “An advertising campaign funded by the City, Tourism Bureau or the Chamber could direct people interested in visiting the sign to areas better suited to large numbers of tourists,” is a sound idea that I fully support.)

Page 10: Establishing a “no-fly zone” would require action by the Federal Aviation Administration—a very tall order. I suggest that the report at least acknowledge that the city cannot unilaterally establish a no-fly zone and that federal action would be required.

Page 11: The draft states, “The Beachwood Gate closure in 2017 into Griffith Park is recognized to have driven more traffic and visitors into the Lake Hollywood and The Oaks area. The Committee recommends the City to review the reason behind the decision to close this gate.”

⁵ According to a 2011 AAA study, “the average risk of severe injury for a pedestrian struck by a vehicle reaches 10% at an impact speed of 16 mph, 25% at 23 mph, 50% at 31 mph, 75% at 39 mph, and 90% at 46 mph. The average risk of death for a pedestrian reaches 10% at an impact speed of 23 mph, 25% at 32 mph, 50% at 42 mph, 75% at 50 mph, and 90% at 58 mph.” See <https://aaafoundation.org/impact-speed-pedestrians-risk-severe-injury-death/>

There is no mystery why the gate was closed: the city closed it in response to the February 3, 2017 order by the court in the *Sunset Ranch Hollywood Stables v. City of Los Angeles* lawsuit (BC576506). However, a careful reading of that order reveals that the court did **not** actually order the gate's closure. To the contrary, the order stated that "members of the public (i.e., pedestrians/hikers) cannot be excluded from using the easement" road north of the Beachwood gate (Order at 7) and ordered that the city "provide public pedestrian access to the Hollyridge Trail, at a location as closest [sic] as closest to" the gate "or at the pre-2001 access point (from Hollyridge Drive), as is practicable." (Order at 9). I suggest changing the sentence quoted above to the following: "The Committee recommends the City explore ways to re-open the gate consistent with the court's rulings in the *Sunset Ranch Hollywood Stables v. City of Los Angeles* lawsuit (BC576506). Notably, in its February 2, 2017 order, the court stated, 'members of the public (i.e., pedestrians/hikers) cannot be excluded from using the easement' road north of the Beachwood gate."

Page 11: The draft suggests exploring the installation of gates that would bar non-residents (or at least their cars) from the neighborhood. This oft-raised suggestion is doomed to failure for numerous reasons financial, practical, and legal, and I urge the committee to drop it. When Whitley Heights, beset by high rates of vandalism and other crime, tried a similar gating gambit in the 1980s with the assent of the city, the California Court of Appeal held emphatically that such action violated state law:

Although we understand the deep and abiding concern of the City and appellant with crime prevention and historic preservation, we doubt the Legislature wants to permit a return to feudal times with each suburb being a fiefdom to which other citizens of the state are denied their fundamental right of access to use public streets within those areas.⁶

An attempt to gate our neighborhood would almost certainly meet a similar fate in the courts as Whitley Height's earlier effort. Allowing such gating would require enactment of a new law by the state legislature, which I highly doubt would be persuaded to "return to feudal times with each suburb being a fiefdom to which other citizens of the state are denied their fundamental right of access to use public streets within those areas," all for the benefit of relatively wealthy residents of Hollywoodland and Lake Hollywood Estates.

Moreover, while the city has a process to "vacate" the public's ability to use public streets, "The City of Los Angeles requires the consents and waivers of damages of **all** property owners adjoining the public right-of-way proposed to be vacated." (emphasis added).⁷ Getting "all"—100%—of the potentially more than 1,000 affected property owners to agree to gating is not just a tall order; it is an impossibility, and I urge the committee not to waste time on such a futile effort.

Page 11: I do not think the analogy to Yosemite National Park is helpful. With minor exceptions, this national park is not a residential area. Also, as federal property, it likely is not subject to

⁶ See *Citizens Against Gated Enclaves v. Whitley Heights Civic Ass'n*, 23 Cal. App. 4th 812, 824 (1994), available at https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=6218748461289866617&q=whitley+heights&hl=en&as_sdt=200006

⁷ See <https://engpermitmanual.lacity.org/land-development/faqs/frequently-asked-questions-street-vacations>

state law governing public access to roads. Whatever the merits of Yosemite's practices, they have little relevance here.

Page 12: The idea of establishing a visitor center for sign-viewing is sound. There are several potentially promising sites on the multiple large surface parking lots in the blocks bounded by Gower St., Bronson Ave., the 101 freeway, and Hollywood Blvd. This area is directly south of the sign and has clear, unobstructed views to it. I suggest that the report urge the city to explore the possibility of constructing a visitor center on one of the parking lots in this area.

Again, I thank HUNC and the Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee for its work on this issue and for the constructive draft report. Please make this letter part of the public record on this matter.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Sheffner', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ben Sheffner

Exhibit A

HOLLYWOODLAND TO HAVE BRIDLE PATHS: HILLS BEHIND TRACT WILL BE MECCA

Los Angeles Times (1923-1995); Jul 22, 1923; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times
pg. 914

HOLLYWOODLAND TO HAVE BRIDLE PATHS

HILLS BEHIND TRACT WILL BE MECCA FOR EQUESTRIANS AND HIKING ENTHUSIASTS

Los Angeles' hiking enthusiasts and equestrians who find it impossible to take a regular vacation this summer to indulge in their favorite form of recreation are expected to find a pleasing substitute in Hollywoodland, following the announcement by S H Woodruff of Hollywoodland that the bridle paths and trails in the upper reaches of the tract are open to the public.

While he has devoted all his time in the last two weeks to supervising the development of the comprehensive system of broad boulevards which are already marking Hollywoodland proper, Mr Woodruff planned at the outset to eventually build trails and paths that would make the higher portions of Hollywoodland a rendezvous for riding and walking parties seeking recreation in an easily accessible place. It has been planned to link these paths up with the city's system in Griffith Park, so that an extensive trip of unrivaled scenic beauty and variety can be made in a few hours, and without leaving the limits of Los Angeles.

Among the most recent plans for homes approved by the Hollywoodland architectural committee are those of Raymond Pettibills and M. A. Ray. Both owners have chosen distinctive styles, and have selected sites that will provide ideal settings for their residences. The number of home plans passed on has exceeded the 100 mark, and intensive building is already under way.

Among the noted visitors to Hollywoodland during the past week was Charles Brazell, son of Mrs George M. Pullman, Jr. Mr Brazell has been living in Paris for the last few years, but announced that he was returning to France in the near future to close out his affairs there, and return here to live. He will bring with him the architect who designed his mother's distinctive chateau in Southern France, and plans to erect in Hollywoodland one of the most architecturally novel homes in Southern California.

Exhibit B

Joseph Castro <joseph.castro@lacity.org>

Tue, Dec 29, 2015 at 9:31 AM

To: Heather Hamza <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Catherine Landers <catherine.landiers@lacity.org>, Sarah Dusseault <sarah.dusseault@lacity.org>, David Ryu <david.ryu@lacity.org>, Aram Sahakian <aram.sahakian@lacity.org>, Patrick Butler <patrick.butler@lacity.org>

Heather,

The call to "restrict traffic" is not for the LAFD to make.... it's only my call if there is an emergency and I'm the Incident Commander.

Every time there has been the evolving stream of emails from concerned citizens complaining of undue traffic in the Hollywood Hills (and its possible effect on LAFD being able to provide services) I either personally drive to the location, or have one of my fire engines go survey it for me. Twice on Christmas eve, and once on Christmas Day I drove the same loop: Griffith Park Observatory down western canyon, up Beachwood canyon to the dead end - back to LedgeWood/Deronda to the viewing location, then back around to the Lake Hollywood Park viewing location and ending up at Dirt Mulhalland. Over the course of the summer my office staff and myself have made over 50 visits to the same area to determine;

1. Can emergency vehicles get to the residents
2. Do we witness any violations of the fire code
3. What are the current fire/weather conditions (fuel moisture/wind, relative humidity)

Based upon these observations (which in a sense is a threat assessment) I then determine what tactics are then necessary to address or compensate for the dynamics of the threat/specific area. Sometimes this requires me moving additional fire resources into the area. Frequently it results in us establishing fire patrols in the area. Other times we request DOT, or LAPD to enforce/tow violators that are illegally parked. The West Bureau of the LAFD encompasses the southern ridge of the entire Santa Monica mountain range. While the complexities of the Hollywood sign areas are somewhat unique (and have become more complex over the course of my nearly 20 years of working in the area) traffic, narrow windy streets, and flammable brush concerns exist from Dodger stadium to the pacific ocean. Traffic is an omni-present challenge throughout the entire bureau. Hollywood Blvd & Sunset Blvd are always gridlocked Fri & Sat nights and require alternative response routes. Sunset Blvd from the 405 to PCH is absolutely stopped everynight from 5:00 pm on until well into the night. All of the areas of Griffith Park seem to be inundated with more visitors/hikers than ever (Helicopter rescues of hikers have quadrupled in the brush areas of the pacific palisades) The LAFD's primary mission is consequence management; responding to the the variety of emergencies that occur. I will say that most of what we are doing seems to be working as we have not had a major conflagration in the Santa Monica mountains in over 30 years. We have several small fires, but due to brush clearance, fire code restrictions on wood roofs, parking restrictions on red flag days, enhanced training, additional resource augmentation on severe weather days, we've been able to stop the fires before homes or lives were lost. However, just because it hasn't happened, doesn't mean it won't, so we remain vigilant. Another important part of my job as the Commander of West Bureau is to connect LAFD Operations with politics. I work with Council members Bonin, O'Farrell, Karetz and Ryu on a daily basis.

I think the major source of dysfunction that seems to exist in the communication of my observations and conclusions is that I do not factor in the effects that traffic/tourists may have on "quality of life" issues for the residents. This is understandably a huge concern for the residents and something that, if I lived in your neighborhood I would certainly be concerned about. My job as the Commander of West Bureau of the LAFD is to communicate honestly to the other members of the City family as it relates to the mission of the LAFD. LAPD who is an expert on crime, does the same. DOT who are experts on traffic, does the same. I will say, unequivocally, that in areas concerning the Hollywood sign, Councilman David Ryu and his staff have been daily

communicators with my office for information, knowledge and provided leadership to the collective city family in their attempts to provide some sort of solution to the residents.

As always, my office is open to the residents, and, as I have in the past we're willing to stay after hours to meet with anyone. On that note however, effective Jan 10th I am being promoted to Chief Deputy of Emergency Operations and will no longer be in command of West Bureau. Assistant Chief Pat Butler will be the acting West Bureau Commander until the Fire Chief appoints a new Deputy to take over command of the West Bureau on Feb 7th. Chief Butler is very familiar with this issue and I know you'll find him to be a knowledgeable and committed professional. I've included him on this email.

Joseph Castro, Deputy Chief L.A.F.D.
Commander, Operations - West Bureau
1800 North Bronson Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90028

robert@myhunc.org

From: wjvd@roadrunner.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 4, 2023 8:08 PM
To: Robert Morrison; 'Sheila Irani'
Cc: crosby@crosbydoe.com; jadotto@yahoo.com; 'Christine OBrien'
Subject: FW: HHA position on the Hollywood Sign

Robert, Below for the HUNC board meeting. Jim

From: Crosby Doe <crosby@crosbydoe.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 4, 2023 6:30 PM
To: Jim Van Dusen <wjvd@roadrunner.com>; John Dotto <jadotto@yahoo.com>
Cc: Linda Doe <lindadoe@lindadoe.com>; Sarajane & John Schwartz <sschw56079@aol.com>; Christine OBrien <obrienmills@icloud.com>; Doug Carstens <dpc@cbcearthlaw.com>
Subject: HHA position on the Hollywood Sign

Dear Jim and John: Please see the link below which opens to the written policy statement received directly from the Hollywoodland Homeowners Association Board of Directors. HUNC's AdHoc Hollywood Sign Committee (of which you are both members) Draft Letter falsely implies that Hollywoodland and other stakeholders support the proposals ("recommendations") in your draft letter. This is simply not the case. Please correct your letter accordingly. You may review Hollywoodland Homeowners Association stated position in regard to Hollywood Sign Issues in this link:

<https://hollywoodland.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2HHA-Policy-Statements-Dec-22-1.pdf>

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Thank you.

Crosby Doe

robert@myhunc.org

From: Hollywoodland Homeowners Association <HHA@hollywoodland.org>
Sent: Monday, January 9, 2023 8:32 AM
To: hunc@empowerla.org
Cc: secretary@myhunc.org; elise.ruden@lacity.org; cityatty.help@lacity.org; nithya.raman@lacity.org; president@myhunc.org; Ethan.weaver@lacity.org; mayor.bass@lacity.org; mayor.helpdesk@lacity.org
Subject: Fwd: My views on the proposals

----- Forwarded message -----

From: mdalcin@aol.com <mdalcin@aol.com>
Date: Sun, Jan 8, 2023 at 4:01 PM
Subject: My views on the proposals
To: hha@hollywoodland.org <hha@hollywoodland.org>

My name is Michele Botts and I am a member of the HHA board.
I would like to make known my ideas on the proposals that I was sent.

The possible turn around at Mulholland Hwy, and Canyon Lake Dr is a really bad idea. Those of us living above it on Mulholland Hwy. would be severely impacted anytime we had to leave and go to the Valley. Also I doubt if you could get the owner of the property at that juncture (Leon Maxx, I believe) to sign on for it

The paid parking idea around and by the dog park would still create problems. Cars would still block on coming and passing traffic like they do now, waiting for other cars to leave their spots.

The fencing at present, although it has stopped people from parking in the red zone or even jumping the curb to park on the inlet there, (years ago I watched people picnic there), does not entirely solve any problems. It is not maintained and is constantly torn and not repaired. not to mention the graffiti on occasion. Some other structure needs to replace it.

NO Smoking signs will be useless as nobody reads Signs any more. The proof of this is the daily foot traffic that completely ignore the No Pedestrian signs along Mulholland Hwy.. they also interfere with traffic, espically on the curves. I have photos from Christmas Day that show people walking in between the cars on both sides of Mulholland Hwy. So dangerous!

I am pleased the arial tram business has been put to rest. The helicopter rides are bad enough. Nobody up here wants to live in an amusement park. We would be turning into the 'Jetsons', if this ever went through.

The idea of a Visitor Center is not a bad one, but where would it be built?
Lighting the sign is also a bad idea. It would only attract more nocturnal visitors. Also who benefits financially

from this? This would not be healthy for the wildlife who inhabit our hillsides either.

I realize Los Angeles is pro tourist and benefits greatly from the people wanting to sign the Hollywood Sign,
but they really need to start to consider the property owners who reside in these areas and pay steep property taxes each year.

Thanks for you time,

Michele Botts

Dear Members of the HUNC Board and the Ad Hoc Hollywood Sign Committee,

We would like to thank all of you for undertaking the task of detailing the numerous problems of tourism, traffic congestion, safety and fire danger created by public viewing of the Hollywood Sign. We agree with your premise that for too long the city has failed to provide adequate resources to deal with these problems. We wholeheartedly support your efforts to insist that the city create workable solutions and we support many of the suggestions you have made to remedy the situation.

That said, we are troubled by certain aspects of your process and the final statement in the report related to the closure of the Beachwood Gate.

First, a bit of background on our involvement with the Ad Hoc committee. A member of our board was asked to attend an initial exploratory meeting regarding the Ad Hoc committee during which its purpose and goals were discussed. At this meeting our board member stated that any conversation or discussion about the Hollywood Sign's impact on the community needed to include an examination of the 2017 Beachwood Gate closure and how that closure has resulted in an increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the Oaks, on Canyon Drive, and in Bronson Park.

The response by the committee organizer and others at that early meeting to this suggestion was an adamant No: the committee was not going to review or re-examine the gate closure. "It was a non-starter." So we chose not to sit on the committee but our boardmember did attend a few of the meetings to observe the progress of the discussions. This same Oaks boardmember attended the final committee meeting where the draft report was being finalized and again brought up the issue of the Beachwood Gate closure asking that the committee recommend that the city review the decision to close the gate. As a result of that meeting a statement to this effect was included in the final draft. Here is the original text of that statement in the report:

"The Beachwood Gate closure in 2017 into Griffith Park is recognized to have driven more traffic and visitors into the Lake Hollywood and The Oaks area. The Committee recommends the City to review the reason behind the decision to close this gate."

When that draft was presented to the full board and after public comment was closed, that particular statement was changed to the following statement:

"The Beachwood Gate closure in 2017 into Griffith Park is recognized to have driven more traffic and visitors into Lake Hollywood and The Oaks area. At this time there are no problems to resolve at the Beachwood gate due to the gate's closure and any discussion of potential problems that would occur if the gates were reopened would be speculative at this time. If any actions were to be taken to reopen the gates, then all issues would need to be reviewed at that time including preparation of an Environmental Impact Report."

There are several things wrong with this updated statement.

- It's not at all clear what the statement means. It acknowledges that the closure has driven traffic to other areas but concludes there's no problem at the gate due to the closure.

Well, yes, a closed gate in and of itself does not have a problem; the problem is the impacts the closed gate has wrought on all the other access points to the Park and the neighborhoods around them.

- It states that any problems that would occur if the gates were reopened would be speculative. What exactly does that mean? Is it referring to problems in Beachwood Canyon? Is it implying that the reopening of the gates would increase problems or decrease them? Or is it simply concluding that we don't want to reopen the gates because we don't know what would happen and we dare not think about it?
- It's not true that "*there are no problems to resolve at the Beachwood gate due to the gate's closure.*" The problems with the gate closure have been documented and discussed by HUNC, CD4, the Oaks Neighborhood Association, the Friends of Griffith, members of BCNA and residents in the adjacent neighborhoods for several years now. These problems have to do with reduced public access to Griffith Park and increased traffic in the adjacent neighborhoods. To ignore this issue in a report about the Hollywood Sign and its impact on the surrounding communities is simple denialism.
- There is also a thinly veiled threat in this statement that any discussion of reopening the gate would automatically trigger an EIR. Who is it who has said this? This scare tactic is unproductive and inappropriate.

The other problem with the "updated statement" is that because it was made after the public comment was closed, members of the community had no ability to respond to its veracity during the HUNC meeting. The public had input on every other aspect of the report but not this revised statement. Why is that?

We hope you will reconsider your position and reinstate the original text which makes no unproven claims; it simply proposes that the city review the decision to close the gate.

We also fully endorse and support the January 8th, 2023 letter from Hollyridge Drive resident Ben Sheffner in which he details needed revisions and corrections to the Sign Committee's report.

While we appreciate the work you've done to address the numerous problems associated with the Hollywood Sign, the report ought to be honest about the trailhead closure. The City's surprising decision in 2017 to close the Beachwood Gate was controversial then and it is deeply problematic now. The issue needs to be reopened.

Yours,

Marisa Schwartz, President
Robert Young, Vice President
Linda Othenin-Girard, Boardmember
Caroline Schweich, Boardmember
The Oaks Neighborhood Association

6/21/21

Reconstructed Timeline Hollywoodland Gifted Park relative to LHE development (tract 24583) of access road

Hollywoodland subdivision, tract 6450 was created in 1923. The western border of the residential tract terminated at 6342 Mulholland HWY. There was no through traffic access road to the reservoir or Barham Blvd. for almost 40 years. The openspace surrounding Hollywoodland residential area was owned by the Sherman Company until 1944 when 444 acres were gifted to the city's RAP department.

Documents cited are from RAP Commission files

8/10/1961 , C-20; Planning Department disapproved of road (Canyon Lake Drive).

9/14/1961 , 135; Refers to earlier meeting 9/10/1961 regarding Planning's query if RAP was willing to dedicate a road through Griffith Park to serve LHE. The road would be " required to traverse through the park from Mulholland Drive (HWY) to the subdivision ... traverse through precipitous portion of the park".

Commission asked the Planning Director to "look with favor upon the dedication of such a street when the detailed plans are provided; and that a further provision be made that the subdivider be required to fence this street on both sides if required by the Department. This latter condition has been approved by the subdivider. "

4/18/1962, Board approved draft ordinance granting permission to Board of Public Works for street purposes in connection with development in and through the Hollywoodland (park) addition to Griffith Park.

6/21/1962 RAP Commission approves connector street across park property, 36" wide street. Subdivider offered to create park, leveling 3.29 acres, agreed to landscape.

3/23/1970 Letter written to RAP, Council, etc from Edward Stephenson and HHA (aka Hollywoodland Improvement Association) outlining all problem issues associated with the park as well as tasks associated with the park that were not followed through with.

Compromised development tract 6450 without proper city process (RAP commission approval, public hearings, city charter protocol)

Late 1990's Tom Labonge told Christine O'Brien he wanted to make the illegal vista on the south side of Canyon Lake Drive an official view site similar to the Hollywood Bowl Overlook. She replied this was unacceptable because of concerns and problems residents at the Hollywood Bowl had experienced as well as the burden of traffic and fire issues associated with extra cars and people in Hollywoodland.

9/1/2011 Staff from Councilman Labonge's office (CD4) cleared the south side of CanyonLake Drive (inside the park). No public hearings, advisement, budget was found for these actions. This was a violation of city charter code:

Alteration of public park land can not be executed by a citizen or a city official. A person can not enter the park to dig the terrain, level land forms, alter topography, create walking paths, create a viewing path and or develop a gravel parking lot to accommodate 20 automobiles.

Rec and Parks projects (alterations) require procedures and budgets. These procedures can be found in the Los Angeles City Charter(sections, 2.16, 371,374,380,590,594).

Any alterations to the park needs Rec and Parks commission and department review including the considerations of these safe guards: Griffith park's cultural heritage designation, environment review, (EIR or negative dec), review of the 2001 Conservation Element (section 2,3,6,7,8,11,12,15,18).