

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

LOS ANGELES RIVER CENTER & GARDENS
570 WEST AVENUE TWENTY-SIX, SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90065
PHONE (323) 221-8900
FAX (323) 221-9001
WWW.SMMC.CA.GOV



November 16, 2020

Mayor Eric Garcetti
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Opposition to Griffith Park Aerial Tram System

Hon. Mayor Garcetti:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) has considered the four proposed Aerial Tram System (ATS) routes in the Department of Recreation Parks commissioned feasibility study for Griffith Park. All the routes predominantly traverse through the 2009 City-designated Wilderness Area in the Park. Any alignment with an aerial or terrestrial footprint in the more ecologically remote parts of the Park begs to permanently reduce the park's wildlife carrying capacity and population sustainability.

As stands today, physical conditions have allowed mountain lion P-22 to live over six years in the park along with populations of bobcat, grey fox and mule deer. The presence of these species challenges many long held parameters of conservation biology. The public value of such high profile large mammals at the terminus of the Santa Monica Mountains near downtown Los Angeles cannot be overstated. It is a perennial gift to the citizens that costs nothing and teaches so much about nature and land use.

The Park's ecosystem capacity will continue to decline with global warming and population pressures. That decline does not have to foretell the loss of the above mentioned wildlife species and many others including rare plants. However, the placement of a highly intrusive ATS in the Park's natural areas would be antithetical to every possible management tool that is beneficial to the stated wildlife species and the sustainability of its overall biodiversity. Funding and effort should instead be directed to habitat acquisition around the Park and focused habitat restoration and enhancement in the Park. Consideration of an ATS is also incongruent with the City's Wildlife Pilot Study designed to maintain wildlife movement between Griffith Park and Santa Monica Mountains habitat on west side of the 405 freeway.

Equally important, the ATS would ruin the natural ambience for hikers, equestrians, and those passively enjoying the views of natural areas.

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As an immediate alternative, the Conservancy urges the City to work with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to acquire and develop an 18-acre property in the Cahuenga Pass that can achieve many objectives of the ATS and reduce neighborhood traffic focused on reaching views of the Hollywood sign. These objectives can be achieved with public acquisition of this property while simultaneously permanently protecting a key section of habitat linkage that connects the Mulholland Drive bridge used by wildlife over the 101 freeway to the DWP Lake Hollywood Reservoir property that abuts Griffith Park.

The Conservancy concurs with City's Griffith Park Advisory Board, Friends of Griffith Park, Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife, California Native Plant Society, and Center for Biological Diversity that any further consideration of an ATS be terminated immediately.

Sincerely,

IRMA R. MUÑOZ
Chairperson