



## **Griffith Park Advisory Board**

*Community Stewards of LA's Largest Park & Great Urban Wilderness*

Department of Recreation and Parks, City of Los Angeles

[www.laparks.org/griffithpark/advisory](http://www.laparks.org/griffithpark/advisory)

March 5, 2021

LA Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners

Dear Commissioners,

In view of COVID-19 closures, we are writing to request a temporary reduction in parking rates at and near the Griffith Observatory. We recommend that these rates, currently \$15 per hour, be lowered until such time as the DASH Observatory and Parkline shuttles can safely resume operations.

During the pandemic, the passive recreation of Griffith Park is more essential than ever, and the current pay station rates for the Observatory parking lot and nearby roads place an undue burden on local residents. As you know, one of our board's primary roles is to assist RAP leadership in understanding the concerns of local stakeholders – and many of those stakeholders have spoken out on this issue. In recent months, we have heard from many Angelenos who have expressed equity concerns about the current parking rates. A year ago, parking at or near the Observatory cost \$6 per hour; now, as a result of the 2020 rate increase and a new definition of “moderate” demand, it is \$15. Yet the Observatory is closed and transit is not running. While we appreciate the unique budgetary pressures of the COVID pandemic, it is worth noting that the paid parking program was specifically intended to reduce traffic congestion, increase equity & accessibility and promote public transit. None of these goals is well-served by the present situation.

In addition to requesting the parking rate reduction, we would also ask for RAP staff to share both historical and ongoing financial information for “Special Fund” revenue and the use of proceeds. This request includes annual figures that will allow our board and members of the public to review the manner in which funds have supported transportation, transit and other improvements in Griffith Park. When the paid parking program launched in 2016, numerous community groups supported it based on the promise that all funds would remain in Griffith Park. It is important to be able to show stakeholders exactly where those funds have gone, and where they continue to go. As a related point, it may be helpful to enhance signage at the pay stations to let park-users know what their parking fees support.

*BOARD MEMBERS: Chair – Jason Greenwald; Vice Chair – Michelle Cramos; Secretary – Bryan Mercke;  
Past Chair – Ron Deutsch; Gene Gilbert; Mike Hain; Chris Laib; Alex Phillips; Karen Thornton*

Finally, we would like to express the policy view that the funding of public transportation to and from a great urban wilderness park ought to be a budgeted, comprehensive program to support transit as a primary transportation method, rather than being funded exclusively by revenue from 285 pay-station spaces. While the current model has provided a valuable revenue source in recent years, the objective of reducing private passenger vehicles in the park calls for bold approaches and more robust funding in the years ahead. Once pandemic-related budget pressures ease, we look forward to working with RAP staff and city policy-makers to better align Los Angeles with international best practices.

Sincerely,

Jason Greenwald  
Chair, Griffith Park Advisory Board

cc: Mike Shull  
AP Diaz  
Stefanie Smith  
Sarah Tanberg