

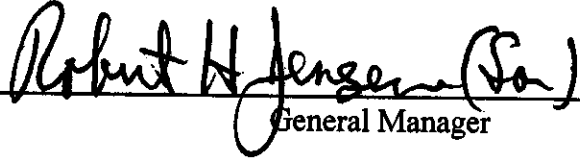
DATE December 14, 2005

C. D. 4

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - VISITOR ACCESS PROGRAM - REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS FOR SHUTTLE OPERATOR AND TIMED ENTRY RESERVATIONS TICKET PROVIDER FOR RE-OPENING PERIOD

J. Combs _____	H. Fujita _____
K. Regan _____	M. Shull _____
F. Mok _____	J. Kolb _____
S. Huntley _____	*B. Jensen _____

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_ Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Approve the Request for Proposals for a Shuttle Operator to service the Griffith Observatory for up to three years, as needed, substantially in the form as on file in the Board office, and subject to approval of the City Attorney as to form;
2. Approve the Request for Proposals for a provider of Timed Entry Reservation Tickets, for on-line reservations for access to the Griffith Observatory, for up to three years, as needed, substantially in the form as on file in the Board office, and subject to approval of the City Attorney as to form;
3. Find, in accordance with Charter Section 1022, that the Department does not have the personnel available in its employ with the appropriate training and expertise to develop, implement, and manage a shuttle program or a timed entry ticketing program for a temporary period, and that the quality of service is dependent on availability of equipment which is not currently available within the City and would require significant time and funding to acquire, and that for these reasons it is more feasible and economical to secure these services by contract; and,
4. Authorize staff to advertise and process both Requests for Proposals upon approval by the City Attorney.

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### SUMMARY:

The world-famous Griffith Observatory will reopen to the public sometime after mid-year in 2006. Prior to closure, visitorship was over 2 million annually, with an unidentified additional number of visitors coming to the environs for the view but not counted in building entry admission numbers. Also, pre-closing length of visit was less than one-hour average. With the new planetarium show, more than 60 new exhibits, and an expansion both in the interior for exhibits and of terraces for the view, length-of-stay will likely be at least two hours, and up to three for those seeing the show. Demand to see the new Griffith Observatory will overwhelm the residential access roads and modest parking availability, as well as the building capacity itself, if visitor access management controls are not in place.

With this challenge in mind, and working in partnership with the Friends Of The Observatory, a study was launched late in 2004 to consider all the dynamics of the challenge and to develop a workable plan for managing visitors. The overall goal of the study was to develop ways to manage and mitigate access to Griffith Observatory and through the neighborhood in order to provide a rewarding experience for visitors while addressing concerns of neighbors and other park users. The basis of the study and resulting recommendations:

- Best practice interviews with cultural institutions nationwide who had similar reopening experience, e.g. Getty Center, Getty Villa, Aquarium of the Pacific, Hayden Planetarium (NYC), National Museum of the American Indian, etc.
- Griffith Observatory historical visitor data, especially closing and celestial events numbers
- Transportation, parking and traffic assessments, including input from L.A. Department of Transportation, Los Angeles Police Department, and Los Angeles Fire Department
- Public input at three community meetings plus additional public outreach

One important result of the initial phases of the study was to quantify the demand and capacity in attendance numbers: on a typical day during re-opening, with no management strategies in place, an estimated 17,000 visitors would try to get to the Observatory. Using Fire Marshal preliminary capacity numbers, and considering an 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. operating day as the extreme possibility, the largest number of visitors that can be accommodated is a little less than 10,000 a day. This essentially means that the facility must develop a plan to manage up to 10,000 people a day through the grounds and building, and must have a strategy to warn the other 7,000 visitors a day whose demand cannot be met. This level of demand could extend from an opening surge of eight weeks to a period of heightened visitor demand of up to two years. Efforts to inform visitors and manage access must also be at a level of efficiency, low cost, educational content, and pleasant environment, that improves the overall experience of attending the Griffith Observatory, or living near the Observatory, during the re-opening period.

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After quantifying the problem, the next phase evaluated the effectiveness and impacts of a host of possible mitigations and strategies, and devised a short list of proposed strategies to review with City officials and the community. The final list of key elements of the proposed Griffith Observatory Visitor Access Management Program are:

- Timed entry passes would be required for all building visitors to balance visitors throughout the day; timed entry would be purchased at shuttle locations or on-line. Exit times may also be built into the visitor pass.
- Visitors would be shuttled from two off-site locations: Hollywood/Highland and Griffith Observatory Satellite. Other areas for consideration may include Dodger Stadium (winter) or Headworks property in Griffith Park near Forest Lawn.
- Shuttle/bus from Hollywood/Highland would access Observatory via Western Canyon; shuttle/bus from Satellite would access Observatory or up Los Feliz.
- A significant public information campaign would be mounted to deter non-ticketed/unauthorized Observatory-bound visitors from making trips. Such a public information campaign would include, but not be limited to, the following methods: 1) multiple media advertising, 2) Changeable Message Signs on freeway exit ramps, Los Feliz Boulevard, Vermont Avenue, and 3) Way finding permanent signage program.

Investigatory interviews with various vendors suggest that approximately \$2.00 or less would be the cost per person for a timed entry reservation ticket and about \$3.00 per person for a round trip bus charge, adding up to a per visitor cost, for the opening demand period, of \$5.00-\$6.00, estimated.

These services are not practical or feasible for the City to self-operate. The timed entry ticketing services require a huge infrastructure to support the expected demand on the Internet and by phone of thousands of simultaneous queries, and since the peak demand is not expected to last even three years, investment in staff, training, and equipment is not practical. The Department has studied and specified a ticketing system that will allow on-line purchases of planetarium show or lecture tickets, and from this study of available systems and hardware, we are aware that the demands of the timed entry would exceed our existing capabilities. Likewise, the lease or purchase, and maintenance and daily operation, of sufficient shuttle buses to handle demand is not practical, as the City would have no other use for them outside Observatory operating hours, and they would also have a significant staffing and maintenance requirement that would rapidly drop off in less than three years.

Accordingly, staff has prepared Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for timed entry ticketing and shuttle services at the Griffith Observatory, in conformance with the Visitor Access Management program summarized above.

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### Significant Proposal and Contractual Provisions

1. **Standard Provisions:** All provisions of the Standard Provisions for City Contracts (Rev. 10/03) with Attachments 1 and 2 will be applicable to these Agreements.
2. **Term:** Each would be for one (1) year, with two one-year renewal options, at the sole discretion of the City. Proposers can choose to propose for both Agreements or on only one or the other.
3. **Cost:** Contractors will bid a cost to provide service, the sum of which will be the total price a visitor pays for their reservation for and transportation to and from the Griffith Observatory.
4. **Contract and Financial Terms:** The City will enter into Agreements whereby the City has no financial responsibility or liability for the operation, including no insurance, data transmission, fuel, or staffing costs; the City will monitor ticketing activity and receive the bus-cost portion of the timed entry ticket fee for pass through to the shuttle contractor. As an option, the City may receive revenue from special package sales of planetarium show tickets with shuttle/entry reservations, to be established when the Board approves a schedule of ticket fees for shows in the Samuel Oschin Planetarium Theater.
5. **Faithful Performance Bond:** A Faithful Performance Bond or Deposit will be required to be maintained for the duration of each Agreement in the amount of \$250,000. Liquidated damages of \$2,500 a day per bus will also be assessed for the shuttle company in the event they fail to provide service.

### Evaluation Process

Department Staff will conduct a preliminary evaluation of all proposals to determine completeness and submission of all compliance documents. An Evaluation Committee consisting of representatives from the Department of Recreation and Parks, and which may include outside evaluators, will review all proposals submitted in response to this RFP in accordance with the criteria set forth below.

#### General Qualifications, including:

- Record of past performance of the proposer in providing similar services
- Relevant public-agency or private experience of the Contractor in providing similar services
- Relevant public-agency experience and length of tenure of the key personnel who will be performing the work

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- Strength of organization—organizational structure, financial stability, resources
- Staff training plan

### Pricing and Value of Services, including:

- Costs of the services as detailed in the proposal
- Customer service plan as detailed in the proposal
- (For Shuttle) Efficiency of logistics and scheduling plans for meeting daily transportation requirements
- (For Ticketing) Relevant samples of website designs which are attractive and user-friendly

### Comprehension of Scope of Services:

- Demonstrate sound understanding of the services required
- Comprehensive, straightforward, simple, and logical proposal identifying approach, plan of action, steps, timeframes, use of resources, and other recommendations to meet the objectives and scope of required work
- (For Shuttle) Specifications and appearance of vehicles planned for use and equipment available on vehicles; custodial and maintenance program details; percentage of fleet using alternative fuels; preliminary logistics and scheduling plan to meet maximum attendance scenario
- (For Ticketing) Demonstrate command of the technical requirements through detail of hardware and software infrastructure plans and equipment proposed for use; maintenance program details including backup and redundancy plans

The Department reserves the right to request additional information to clarify proposals. The main RFP documents will be available on the Department's website. The anticipated time of completion for the RFP process and award of the Agreement is approximately four to six months. Depending on proposals received and necessity to provide service, more than one shuttle contract may be recommended for award.

### FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

These contract services are planned to be self-sufficient, with modest fees paid by visitors during the opening period evenly reimbursing the cost of the contract services. There will be minor General Fund costs to process the RFPs and administer the contracts. Other expenses related to the Visitor Access program have been proposed in the 2006-2007 budget to be funded through planetarium show revenues.

Report prepared by Linda Barth, Administrative Resources