

APPROVED

APR 06 2023

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

BOARD REPORT

NO. 23-070

DATE April 06, 2023

C.D. #

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: GRIFFITH PARK – APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF INTERNMENT CAMP EDUCATION SIGN IMPROVEMENTS AS A DONATION FROM THE GRIFFITH J. GRIFFITH CHARITABLE FOUNDATION AND THE LOS ANGELES PARKS FOUNDATION TO BE INSTALLED AT TRAVEL TOWN – CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 11(5) [INSTALLATION OF SIGNS LOCATED ON CITY PROPERTY MANAGED BY A CITY DEPARTMENT WHICH HAS A SIGN POLICY ADOPTED BY ITS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS] OF CITY CEQA GUIDELINES AS WELL AS ARTICLE 19, SECTION 15311(a) OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES

B.Aguirre ba M. Rudnick
B. Jackson C. Santo-Domingo
N. Williams

Handwritten signature of General Manager

Approved X Disapproved Withdrawn

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Approve the proposed park improvement project (Project) at Travel Town in Griffith Park, consisting of the installation of an educational sign regarding the Griffith Park Internment Camp as more fully described in this Report and as shown in Attachments 1 and 2 of this Report, to be installed in Travel Town at the location specified in Attachment 4 of this Report ("Improvements");
2. Authorize the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) Planning, Maintenance, and Construction Branch (PMC), upon the Project's approval from the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners (Board), to issue a Right of Entry Permit (ROE) to the Los Angeles Parks Foundation and it's selected contractor, Great Western Installations, authorizing the installation of the Improvements;
3. Accept the Improvements valued up to approximately \$4,600, subject to a post-completion inspection of the installed Improvements by PMC staff, as a donation to the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) from the Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Foundation and the Los Angeles Parks Foundation;
4. Determine that the Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 11(5)

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[Installation of signs located on City property managed by a City department which has a sign policy adopted by its Board of Commissioners] of City CEQA Guidelines as well as Article 19, Section 15311(a) of California CEQA Guidelines and direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Los Angeles County Clerk

5. Authorize RAP's Chief Accounting Employee to prepare a check to the Los Angeles County Clerk in the amount of Seventy Five Dollars (\$75.00) for the purpose of filing the NOE;
6. Authorize RAP staff to make technical corrections as necessary to carry out the intent of this Report.

SUMMARY

The area in Griffith Park now known as Travel Town was once home to a Civilian Conservation Camp. Like other camps located throughout the country, it was purposed to meet a wartime need for internment camps. In December 1941, the day after the Pearl Harbor attack, Griffith Park was allocated \$32,400 by the War Department to build a campsite. Griffith Park was designated as a Prisoner of War Enclosure known as the Griffith Park Internment Camp. Immigration and Naturalization Service used Griffith Park to detain small groups of first-generation immigrants. Approximately 101 Japanese, 21 Germans and 4 Italians were detained for periods of one night to several months during World War II. The Army closed this site in 1943 as the need for military guards increased throughout the war effort and were deployed elsewhere. Long term detention never occurred at the Griffith Park Civilian Conservation Camp site; however, this location is historically significant to Griffith Park and the City of Los Angeles

In recognition of this history, the Los Angeles Parks Foundation has received a generous donation from the Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Foundation consisting of an educational sign which will be placed on a pedestal to be installed at Travel Town. A rendering of the sign and the pedestal as well as where the sign will be installed at Travel Town is set forth in Attachments 1, 2 and 4 respectively. The sign and the pedestal has the following characteristics:

- Custom-High Pressure Laminate panels with matte finish
- 1/8" (inch) thick exterior panel
- 24" (inches) in height
- 36" (inches) in width
- Standard eased edge .03" (inch) rounded radius corners
- Double cantilever pedestal (45-degree angle)
- 54" (inch) tall posts from the ground to top of sign
- In-ground mount
- Black powder coat

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The narrative for this sign was provided by Dr. Russ Endo, Professor of Ethnic Studies, University of Colorado and is also supported by Travel Town Museum Foundation, Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition, and the Japanese American National Museum. This project was shared with The Griffith Park Advisory Board to provide community engagement. Letters of support for the proposed project are attached to this report in full support.

TREES AND SHADE

There is no impact to shade or trees.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed Project consists of installation of signs located on City property managed by a City department which has a sign policy adopted by its Board of Commissioners.

According to the parcel profile report retrieved March 10, 2023 this area does not reside within a coastal or methane zone, but it is located in a liquefaction zone. The construction of this Project will not create conditions that could lead to liquefaction.

Therefore, there is no reasonable possibility that the proposed Project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern or have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances. No other known projects would involve cumulatively significant impacts, and no future projects would result from the proposed Project. As of March 10, 2023, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) (Envirostor at www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWCB) (Geotracker at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) have listed the Project site as N. 80000257, because In August, 1943, the area became the Army's Western Corps Photographic Center and Camouflage Experimental Laboratory. The installation of the sign, however, will create a significant hazard to the public. According to the Caltrans Scenic Highway Map there is no scenic highway located within the vicinity of the proposed Project or within its site. Although the proposed Project is located within Griffith Park, an historic cultural monument of the City of Los Angeles (HCM#942). Specifically, Travel Town has been recognized as an Historic Cultural Monument (HCM #474) as well. However, the installation of a sign that memorializes the historic role of that space, will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any historical resource.

Based in this information, staff recommends that the Board determine that it is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 11(5) of City CEQA Guidelines as well as to Article 19, Section 15311(a) of California CEQA Guidelines. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk upon Board's approval.

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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The installation of the improvements will not have any fiscal impact on RAP's General Fund, as costs for the installation of the Improvements will be funded entirely by LAPF.

This report was prepared by Stefanie Smith, Superintendent, Griffith Region.

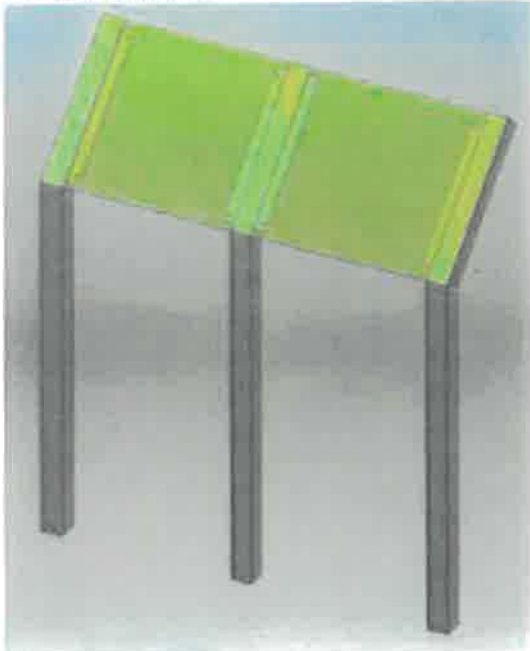
LIST OF ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS

1. Rendering of Signage.
2. Rendering of Pedestal Frame, standard for all education signage in Griffith Park.
3. Letters of Support.
4. Site Map

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Triple cantilever pedestal. Panel sits on face of all 3 post. In-ground or surface mount available.





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

November 9, 2022

Los Angeles Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners

Dear Commissioners,

Griffith Park has an undeniably rich and often storied history, which should be available and accessible to all users of the park. Over the past year, Recreation and Parks staff has done an amazing job identifying locations and narratives of historical significance to be highlighted through educational and informational signs throughout the park. We applaud this effort to bring both the positive and complicated stories to life.

During World War II, thousands of Japanese, German, and Italian immigrant leaders were confined without due process in US detention and internment camps as suspected threats to national security. One such camp, operated by the Army, resided in Griffith Park at the site of the former Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Riverside, now home to Travel Town Museum and Los Angeles Live Steamers. For more than a year, this small camp, which could accommodate over 500 people, served as a staging area for larger camps in other parts of the country.

While this shameful part of our nation's history is problematic, we applaud the effort to acknowledge it and educate visitors. Shining a light on our park's role in this sad chapter will enhance the experience of visitors by deepening the public's understanding of its history. We strongly support the signage proposal for the Griffith Park Internment Camp and look forward to seeing more proposals for educational signage brought forward by Recreation and Parks staff and others who are knowledgeable about the park's history.

Sincerely,

Michelle Cramés
 Chair, Griffith Park Advisory Board

cc: RAP: Jimmy Kim; Matthew Rudnick; Brenda Aguirre; Cathie Santo Domingo; Darryl Ford; Stefanie Smith; CD4: Emma Taylor

BOARD MEMBERS: Chair – Michelle Cramés; Vice Chair – Karen Thornton; Secretary – Chris Laib; Aida Ashouri; Aaron Chung; Alex Crow; Gene Gilbert; Jason Greenwald; Alex Phillips



University of Colorado
Denver

February 22, 2023

Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners
Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Commissioners:

I am an emeritus professor of sociology and Asian American studies at the University of Colorado (Denver and Boulder). Among my other primary affiliations are the Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition, Amache Alliance, and the Association for Asian American Studies.

I am writing in support of the proposed Griffith Park Internment Camp sign. During World War II and under the authority of Presidential Proclamations, thousands of Japanese, German, and Italian immigrant leaders were incarcerated without due process as potential threats to national security. Since 2016, I have been researching such individuals from Southern California. Over the past year, Griffith Park historian Linda Barth and I have pieced together the story of the Griffith Park camp using hundreds of pages of documents. This work provides the basis for the material on the proposed sign.

Across the U.S., immigrant leaders were confined in dozens of sites. Many have been given historic status or other visible identification. Recognition of such sites provides an opportunity to educate the public about the importance of protecting everyone's rights and freedom, especially in times of national crisis.

In Southern California, Griffith Park was one of just three primary incarceration sites and the only one operated by the U.S. Army. This site is an integral part of the history of Griffith Park, Los Angeles, and indeed the United States. It is well-deserving of the proposed informational sign.

Sincerely,

Russell Endo
Russell Endo, PhD
Department of Ethnic Studies

TRAVEL TOWN MUSEUM FOUNDATION
AMERICAN SOUTHWESTERN RAILWAY ASSOCIATION
• INCORPORATED •

POST OFFICE BOX 21039
GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA 91221

February 18, 2023

Board of Recreation & Parks Commissioners, City of Los Angeles
Via Email: rap.commissioners@lacity.org

Honorable Members of the Board:

On behalf of Travel Town Museum Foundation, I am pleased to endorse installation of a permanent commemorative sign at the Travel Town Museum entitled: "Site of the Griffith Park Internment Camp (1942-1943)" We understand the sign will be installed in the central plaza area of the Museum, in the vicinity of the commemorative statue for the CCC camps which operated in the area in the 1930s, and an interpretive display about the growth of roadways along railroad lines in Los Angeles.

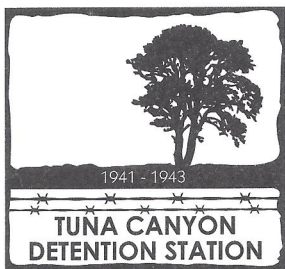
The Travel Town Museum Foundation is dedicated to supporting the Museum's railroad history mission through restoration projects, historic equipment operations, interpretive programs, and outreach to families. We appreciate that the Travel Town Museum, marking 70 years in operation as one of the nation's oldest and most beloved railroad museums, also has a role in the history of Griffith Park. The sharing of stories of Los Angeles' residents as revealed through the rich history of Griffith Park enhances the stature of the Museum and continues to expand outreach opportunities to new audiences.

Working with subject matter experts and community members with personal connections, a Foundation volunteer researcher has been involved in developing the proposed sign's approach and content. The Foundation looks forward to the Board's approval of this sign installation and to working with community members and staff to unveil it at a public event. Thank you for your consideration of this project and for your continuing support for the Travel Town Museum.

Sincerely,



GREG GNEIER
President
Travel Town Museum Foundation



TUNA CANYON DETENTION STATION COALITION
San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center
12953 Branford Street Pacoima, CA 91331
(818) 925-2603

Emeritus Chair
Dr. Lloyd Hitt

February 26, 2023

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Jeannie Stirdivant
Dr. Sigrud B. Toyne

Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners

Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

The Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition wholeheartedly supports the proposed Griffith Park Internment Camp historical sign.

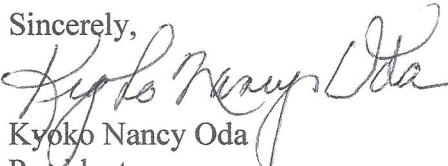
The purpose of the Coalition is to illuminate the U.S. Government's World War II incarceration of Japanese, German, and Italian immigrants and others at Tuna Canyon Detention Station so that such injustice is never again experienced by any group. The Coalition partners with many organizations that support our mission, including the Japanese American National Museum, Manzanar Committee, San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center, Tule Lake Committee, and Japanese American Citizens League-Southwest District.

The Tuna Canyon Detention Station, located in Tujunga, has a close relationship with the Griffith Park Internment Camp. The first Griffith Park prisoners were Japanese immigrant leaders confined there temporarily under the supervision of Tuna Canyon Officer-in-Charge Merrill Scott. Many subsequent Griffith Park prisoners were transferred from Tuna Canyon. Because of concerns about internal security, the U.S. Army wanted individuals arrested by the FBI to be moved away from the Pacific Coast. In Southern California, Tuna Canyon and Griffith Park were critical for such plans.

Tuna Canyon has been designated as Los Angeles Cultural Historical Monument #1039 by the City of Los Angeles. One of the Coalition's initial plans is to install a plaque at this site. Plaques and signs, such as the one proposed for Griffith Park will remind visitors of this dark period and are important because we believe that it should not happen again to anyone, anywhere.

We advocate for the plaque because vigilance is critical or history may repeat itself.

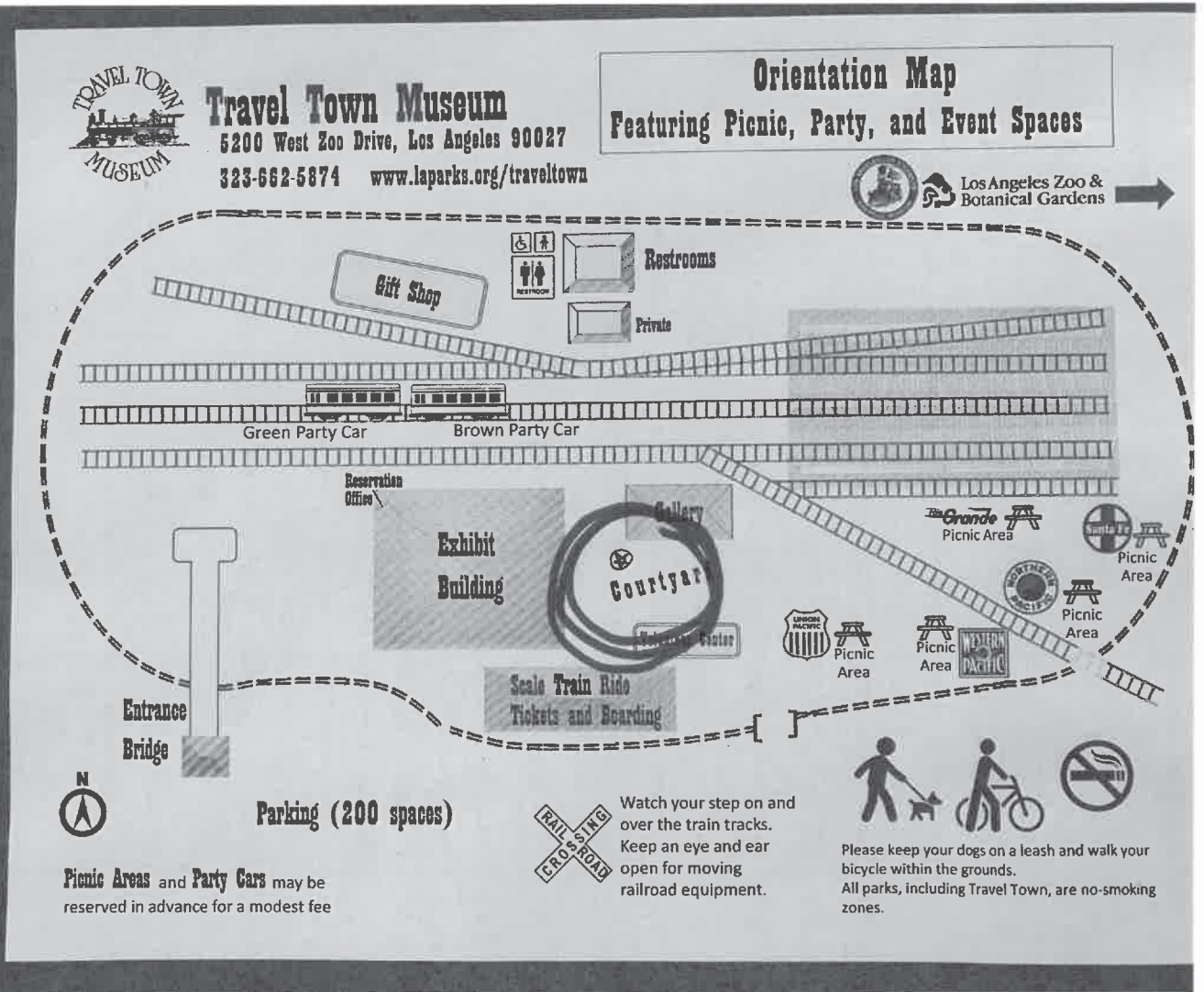
Sincerely,


Kyoko Nancy Oda
President

Emeritus Board
Marc Stirdivant

Legal Counsel
Gregory Culling, J.D.

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