

APPROVED

DEC 16 2021

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

BOARD REPORT

NO. 21-220

DATE December 16, 2021

C.D. 4

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: GRIFFITH PARK – TOM LABONGE PANORAMA IMPROVEMENTS AND MEMORIAL PLAQUE – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION – CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 1(1) [EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS INVOLVING MINOR CONSTRUCTION WHERE THERE BE NEGLIGIBLE OR NO EXPANSION OF USE], CLASS 2 [REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING STRUCTURES WHERE THE NEW STRUCTURE WILL BE LOCATED ON THE SAME SITE AND HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME PURPOSE AND CAPACITY AS THE STRUCTURE REPLACED], CLASS 11(5) [SIGNS LOCATED ON CITY PROPERTY MANAGED BY A CITY DEPARTMENT WHICH HAS A SIGN POLICY ADOPTED BY ITS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS], AND CLASS 11(6) [PLACEMENT OF MINOR STRUCTURES ACCESSORY TO EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL FACILITIES] OF CITY CEQA GUIDELINES AND ARTICLE 19, SECTIONS 15301(a), 15302 AND 15311 OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES

AP Diaz	_____	M. Rudnick	_____
H. Fujita	_____	<i>for</i> C. Santo Domingo	<u>DF</u>
J. Kim	_____	N. Williams	_____


General Manager

Approved X Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Accept a donation of a Tom Labonge memorial plaque and other improvements at the Tom LaBonge Panorama in Griffith Park from the Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF) as set forth in this Report and Attachment 1 to this Report;
2. Approve the installation of the improvements and memorial plaque at the Tom LaBonge Panorama, as described in this Report and Attachment 1 to this Report (Project);
3. Determine that the proposed Project consisting of the installation of a memorial plaque located on City property managed by a City department which has a sign policy adopted by its Board of Commissioners, is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 1(1)

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[Exterior alterations involving minor construction where there be negligible or no expansion of use], Class 2 [Replacement of existing structures where the new structure will be located on the same site and have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced], Class 11(5) [Signs located on City property managed by a City department which has a sign policy adopted by its Board of Commissioners] and Class 11(6) [Placement of minor structures accessory to existing institutional facilities] of City CEQA Guidelines and Article 19, Sections 15301(a), 15302 and 15311 of California CEQA Guidelines and direct Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) Staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE);

4. 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 an NOE; and,
5. Authorize RAP to issue the appropriate Right of Entry Permit for the installation of the Project; and,
6. Authorize RAP staff to make technical corrections as necessary to carry out the intent of this Report.

SUMMARY

Griffith Park is located at 4730 Crystal Springs Drive in the Hollywood community of the City. This 4,281.73-acre park provides a wide variety of recreational programs and activities, such as train rides, a merry-go-round, hiking trails, and golf courses, for the local community. Approximately 18,155 City residents live within a one-half (½) mile walking distance of Griffith Park.

On March 18th 2021, the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners (Board) approved the naming of the top of Mount Hollywood in Griffith Park to the 'Tom LaBonge Panorama' (Panorama) (Report No. 21-042).

PROJECT SCOPE

The Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF) has proposed the following improvements at the Tom LaBonge Panorama (Improvements):

- Installation of a 14 inch wide, 14 inch tall memorial plaque dedicated to Tom LaBonge.
- Replacement of the existing "corral" fence with new Sequoia wood fencing.
- Refurbishment of the existing trail post back to its original condition.
- Repainting of existing picnic tables.
- Installation of two (2), 5 foot wide, 2 foot tall educational point of interest signs that identify noteworthy locations in the city that are visible from the viewpoint.

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Illustrations of the proposed improvements and memorial plaque language are attached to this Report (Attachment 1).

The proposed Improvements and final design were discussed at the following Griffith Park Advisory Board meetings: February 25, 2021, July 22, 2021 and August 26, 2021. The Friends of Griffith Park and the surrounding community have also been notified of the proposed Improvements via the Griffith Park News and newsletter updates.

The Office of Council District 4 provided a letter to the Board expressing support for the proposed Project. Also, on September 20th, 2021, the Griffith Park Advisory Board sent a letter to the Board expressing support for the proposed Project. The letters of support are shown in Attachment 2.

The proposed Project was presented to the Department of Recreation and Parks' Facility, Repair and Maintenance Commission Task Force on November 4th, 2021. The proposed Project received support from the Task Force, and an approval was made to present the proposed Project to the full board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners.

The proposed Improvements and plaque will be installed and funded by LAPF. LAPF is aiming to complete the installation of the various improvements by early January 2022, which will be the one year anniversary of Tom LaBonge's passing.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed Project consists of exterior alterations involving minor construction where there be negligible or no expansion of use; replacement of existing structures where the new structure will be located on the same site and have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced; signs located on City property managed by a City department which has a sign policy adopted by its Board of Commissioners and placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing institutional facilities. As such, RAP 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 1(1), Class 2, Class 11(5) and 11(6) of City CEQA Guidelines and Article 19, Sections 15301(a), 15302 and 15311 of California CEQA Guidelines. Staff will file a NOE with the Los Angeles County Clerk upon the Board's approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed improvements will have no impact on RAP's General Fund. The improvements and installation will be funded by the LAPF.

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STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES AND GOALS

Approval of this Board Report advances RAP's Strategic Plan by supporting:

Goal No. 1: Provide Safe and Accessible Parks

Outcome No. 2: All parks are safe and welcoming

Result: The acceptance of the donated Tom LaBonge memorial plaque and other improvements at the panorama will enhance the park user's experience.

This Report was prepared by Ajmal Noorzayee, Management Assistant, Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Attachment 1 – Renderings of the Proposed Improvements
- 2) Attachment 2 – Letters of Support



LARIACS 2017 Color-Ortho



10 Feet

Tom LaBonge Panorama - Aerial View, Existing



General views of the existing site





Broken stonework



Missing fence rail



Dilapidated fence rail



Dilapidated trail marker



Existing damaged rail



Existing



Example:
New Sequoia Rail, 2 rails high



New Sequoia Rail, 2 high in a lighter finish



Historic image with Charlie Turner



Existing Trail Post



Proposed Trails Post, refurbished.
To be hand-painted to resemble original



Tom LaBonge served the City of Los Angeles for 39.6 years, including 14 years as Councilmember of the Fourth District. He loved Los Angeles and believed in parks and open space. Tom hiked to this peak every morning for over 45 years and championed the park as part of the soul of the city that every visitor and resident should know and enjoy.

One of his greatest accomplishments was leading the expansion of Griffith Park by 500 acres through a collaborative effort of public and private funds, the largest parcel being Cahuenga Peak, the land west of the Hollywood Sign that had once been slated for development.

“That now is owned by the people forever. A park is a park is a park. That land is always going to be public. That land is always going to be pure.”

LET'S CONTINUE TO ENJOY AND LOVE LOS ANGELES

Tom LaBonge Panorama - Proposed Plaque



Sample of new Point Of Interest sign angled at 45° and will not exceed the height of the new railing.

“Let’s continue to love and enjoy Los Angeles.”

In Memory of Tom LaBonge · 1953-2021

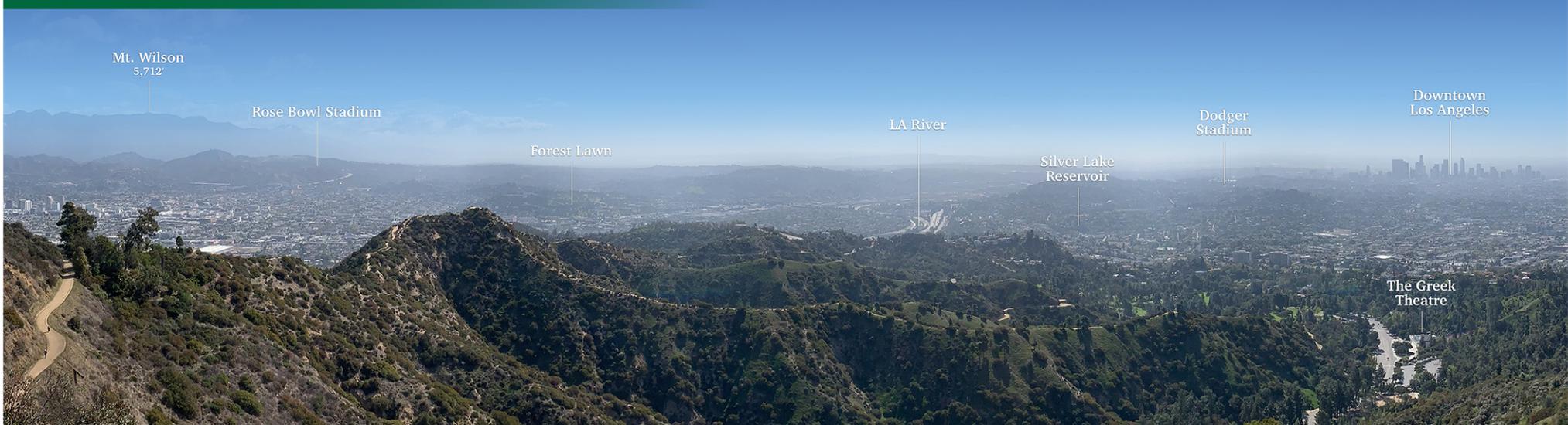
Looking southwest



“Let’s continue to love and enjoy Los Angeles.”

In Memory of Tom LaBonge · 1953-2021

Looking southeast



Sample images of Points Of Interest signs proposed for the panorama area.

Tom LaBonge Panorama - Points Of Interest Signs



Proposed perspective view of the finished site including repainted and refurbished trail post, plaque, and point of interest sign.

**NITHYA
RAMAN**| Los Angeles
City Councilmember
4th District

September 9, 2021

RAP Board of Commissioners
Recreation and Parks
221 N Figueroa Street Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Letter of Support for the Tom LaBonge Memorial

Dear Board of Commissioners,

I am writing to voice my support of the Tom LaBonge Memorial Panorama. Councilmember Tom LaBonge was a true embodiment of what it means to be a civil servant, always placing the City of Los Angeles and its people first. As a Councilmember, he was a leader, a public figure, and a true statesman, serving to unite people together around common goals.

The proposed site is an overlook which LaBonge hiked to every day for 45 years, and provides a beautiful panoramic view of our city. The memorial will have a plaque honoring his life, benches for picnickers, and a description of the incredible view for visitors looking out from this unparalleled vista.

In addition to the memorial, significant improvements will also be made to the area, restoring the beauty it held during LaBonge's life. The project includes much needed repairs to the existing trail marker and fencing, as well as the repainting of the tables and fence.

Tom LaBonge was always someone who cared incredibly deeply about the Los Angeles park system. It is only fitting that his final gift to the people of this city be one of LA's most remarkable public spaces.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nithya Raman".

Councilmember Nithya Raman
Council District 4



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

September 20, 2021

Los Angeles Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners

Dear Commissioners:

In the 125 years since its founding, Griffith Park has had few champions like Tom LaBonge. It is therefore fitting to honor him atop Mt. Hollywood, with its commanding views of the Griffith Observatory, the Hollywood Sign, the trails and the city skyline.

We write in unanimous and enthusiastic support of the LaBonge Panorama proposal prepared by Recreation & Parks staff, which was revised in response to community input. The resulting design is both an honor to a man who loved and supported this park like few others, and a destination for legions of hikers, walkers, equestrians and others who reach the summit.

Again, we support this proposal wholeheartedly.

Sincerely,

Jason Greenwald
Chair, Griffith Park Advisory Board

cc: Mike Shull
AP Diaz
Cathie Santo Domingo
Matt Rudnick
Darryl Ford
Stefanie Smith
Tracy James
Helene Rotolo

*BOARD MEMBERS: Chair – Jason Greenwald; Vice Chair – Michelle Cramés; Secretary – Chris Laib;
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