DEPARTMENT OF **CITY PLANNING**

OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

CITY OF LOS ANGELES **CALIFORNIA**

EXECUTIVE OFFICES 200 N. Spring Street, Room 525 LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801 (213) 978-1271

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP DIRECTOR

SHANA M.M. BONSTIN ARTHI L. VARMA, AICP

DEPUTY DIRECTOR LISA M. WEBBER, AICP DEPUTY DIRECTOR

221 N. FIGUEROA STREET, SUITE 1350 Los Angeles, CA 90012-2639 **CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**

BARRY A. MILOFSKY

GAIL M. KENNARD VICE PRESIDENT

RICHARD BARRON PILAR BUELNA DIANE KANNER

COMMISSION OFFICE (213) 978-1300



March 16, 2023

Mr. Jimmy Kim, General Manager Department of Recreation and Parks 221 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 350 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Kim:

On behalf of the City's Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC), I am extending thanks to the Department of Recreation and Parks' (RAP) for their January 19, 2023 presentation to the CHC regarding the Griffith Park Pony Ride. While the Commission recognizes that RAP and the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners continue to consider options for this portion of Griffith Park, the City's Administrative Code requires the CHC to take all steps necessary to preserve Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCM). As such, in an effort to work together and find common ground, the CHC would like to engage in the process of determining the future of this important site.

Griffith Park may be the largest locally-designated landmark in the United States. As City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #942, it is defined by buildings, natural features, and landscapes that each have individual significance, but at the same, these elements contribute collectively to the significance of the 4,218-acre park. These remarkable character-defining features include an extensive array of historic resources, from the Griffith Observatory to the Merry-Go-Round, from the Wilson and Harding Golf Clubhouse to the Bird Sanctuary, and from the Greek Theatre to the Old Zoo structures.

The Pony Ride, dating originally from 1947, was specifically identified as one of the contributing elements when the Park was designated as an HCM in 2009. The prominent features of the Pony Ride were noted as:

- Square plan waiting area canopy
- Oval riding track with wood plank fencing
- Square plan, one-and-a-half story barn style ticket kiosk

Like many others, the CHC was surprised to learn in December 2022 that the Pony Ride would cease operation. For over 75 years, the Pony Ride has been among the most beloved features of the Park as it has attracted multiple generations of families as well as countless numbers of visitors to Griffith Park. It was considered a legacy use in the Park. The significance of this Park feature derives not only from its physical improvements, but also from the more intangible components of its heritage—the activities, traditions, and people that have given life and meaning to this legacy. Public testimony at the January 19 CHC meeting reinforced how the Pony Ride served the function of a legacy use within the Park.

The CHC knows that a concession involving ponies and other uses continue to be considered by RAP. It is the CHC's position that the Pony Ride has been a long-standing Griffith Park legacy attraction and use, and an integral character-defining feature of the HCM.

As RAP moves forward, I ask that you invite the CHC to participate in developing a future Request for Proposals, as well as in inter-departmental consultations, and the decision-making process. The CHC also requests that public input be sought as we work together to ensure the preservation of the character-defining features of the Pony Ride.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barry Milofsky President, Cultural Heritage Commission

cc: Office of Mayor Karen Bass

Nithya Raman, Councilmember District Four Stefanie Smith, Superintendent, Griffith Park