

Questions to speakers/Dec. 1 Community Meeting re Potrero

- 1) Will correct signs be installed by the time of park opening on Saturday, in conspicuous places in the canyon, including at the Friends St. entrance, setting forth the park rules and regulations and expressly stating that the operating hours will be from sunrise to sunset?

--Yes. Councilmember Bonin has made a motion

(https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2022/22-1472_misc_11-22.pdf) which will be waived out of committee, and moved to the floor for a vote in the week of December 5th. It is expected to pass, cementing the hours of this park from sunrise to sunset. Councilmember Bonin plans to have this done before his last day in office, on December 11th.

- 2) As of opening day (Saturday), will all entrance gates to the park automatically be locked at sunset and opened at sunrise daily?

--Yes.

- 3) Have any RAP officials conferred with our Senior Lead Officer Brian Espin as to the best locations where such signs should be posted in the park, in the interest of public safety? If not, will officials do so in the near future?

--Yes, according to Brian Espin, he has been contacted and has suggested signs be placed at the mouth and gates of the park. He will be directing his LAPD Patrol officers to make more rounds at Potrero, and urges the community to call 311 and stay on the phone to report any complaints or illegal activity they observe. LAPD's ability to secure more resources for the Palisades/this park will depend on this reporting of activity.

-- Additionally, Sharon Kilbride, PPTFH Co-Chair, asked RAP and the LAFD to make sure the No Trespass VHFHSZ signs that PPTFH developed in 2016 be installed around the south rim of the park so as to deter homeless encampments or the entry of homeless individuals into the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone of Potrero Canyon.

- 4) An important motion recently filed by Councilmember Bonin in City Council calls on the RAP Commissioners to instruct the Park Rangers to enforce the park hours "7 days a week." When do you expect this motion to be heard in Council? Will CD 11 staff be briefing our new Councilmember Traci Park on the status of this motion – and other outstanding matters involving Potrero Canyon -- when she takes office?

--It was clarified that the motion doesn't require ranger presence, but requests that the RAP Commission instruct Park Rangers enforce park hours. Unfortunately, Chief Losorelli from the Park Rangers, who was on the call, was not able to connect via audio, but the point was made that the Rangers are spread thin and likely will not have a constant presence at Potrero Canyon. The motion will be heard in City Council the week of December 5th, and staff (Noah) has already prepared an extensive briefing memo for the incoming administration of Traci Park.

5) Notwithstanding the motion by CM Bonin, residents were previously informed that no Park Ranger will be assigned to this park, in part because there is a shortage of resources. Is that still the case? *What would be required in order to assign a Park Ranger?* Is this a question of funding, and if so, can the Councilmember request additional funding for this purpose? Can a Ranger or other appropriate RAP, LAPD or LAFD official -- or appropriate City staffer -- be assigned to at least sweep the park at dusk daily (before the gates are locked), to ensure that no persons remain in the park after hours?

-- We were assured that Palisades Recreation Center staff would check all gates and their vicinity each night, before they leave the park. A "sweep" of the entire park cannot be done, but SLO Espin said he would instruct LAPD Officers on nightly patrol to visit the park and conduct reconnaissance as best they can. With the opening of this "regional" park, the community made clear it expected more city funding to be allocated to the park for public safety and fire prevention. Brian Espin said LAPD does not currently have access to the park by a means to unlock the gates and conduct reconnaissance. The community pressed the city to make sure LAPD had access to the gates before the opening of the park (*pushed back to December 10th*).

6) Palisades residents are very concerned, based on experience, that the park will become a magnet for illegal and unsafe activity, which already occurs in our restricted bluff and canyon areas, including camping, setting fires, smoking, and setting off fireworks (by homeless persons and other individuals). Wildfires believed to be connected to these activities are a regular occurrence. Please see below the "*fire media*" summary. What security measures will be in place to help prevent illegal and unsafe activity from taking place after hours in the park, and in turn to protect against possible catastrophic wildfires starting in the park?

--Chief Joseph Everett from LAFD assured the community that firefighting resources were abundant and that Stations 69 and 23 would respond to any threat of fire quickly. He also said County Fire had a quick reaction time to the Palisades and would be here fast to assist. We were told drones can be deployed in case of emergencies and that LAFD is well prepared to deal with any threat of fire. The point was made that none of these tools were aimed at prevention, but rather reactive to the outbreak of fire. We were told that the likelihood of a brush fire at Potrero Canyon was low because the brush had been cleared out and the landscaping is indigenous, and not prone to fire. The vegetation, we were told, is not conducive to fire. The Chief also said he would be sending patrols through Potrero and particularly, his CERT trainees would be out patrolling on Red Flag days.

7) Would it be feasible to install (and have staff monitor) security cameras at strategic locations in the park?

-- Some parks apparently do have cameras installed, and while there is no funding in place now, senior RAP staff will look into the feasibility of cameras and get back to the community at the next Palisades Park Advisory Board meeting.

- 8) Do any of the guest speakers have other ideas for measures that might be feasible to implement to ensure public safety and security at the park?
- The point was made that private security would be the best option for the community. Any private security firm would have to be approved by the City of LA (Gates, for example, is not). RAP staff will send a list of approved security vendors to PPCC and the community.
- 9) What is RAP's plan for park maintenance, including landscaping and trash collection? Where will trash cans be placed? Will there be a trash can at the Friends St. entrance? How often will trash cans be emptied? Are there sufficient funds for ongoing maintenance, and if so, for how long?
- There is a maintenance contract (as well as a landscaping contract) in place. The maintenance contractor will collect the trash and haul it off. Any trash collected by park staff will be kept at the Palisades Recreation center, in their existing trash yard. Trash cans will be placed at all entrances and throughout the park, and along the 12-foot wide, soil-cement trail.
- 10) What City official(s) should be contacted in the event of an issue or problem in the park. Who will be the contact person for the park and what is his or her contact information? Will the contact be available 24-7?
- RAP staff at the Palisades Recreation Center, which oversee Potrero Canyon for now, should be contacted during the day. Outside park operating hours, LAPD/311 should be contacted. Palisades.RC@lacity.org and/or Tel: (310) 454-1412. Pali Rec Center Hours: Mon-Fri: 9am to 9pm. Sat & Sun: 9am to 5pm. We asked for a 24/7 email or hotline setup, but were told 311 is best for after hours. Park staff is best during park operating times.
- 11) What is the status of the lateral trail from the south/PCH end of the canyon to Temescal Canyon Rd? This trail has long been required by the Coastal permit, and is supported by PPCC, to provide safe access to the coast before a pedestrian bridge across PCH can be built. Where do the City's negotiations with Caltrans stand? Are there any written plans for the lateral trail? What is the status of funding for the trail? Will there be signs in place at park opening, stating "future coastal access" and will the south/PCH entrance remain closed until the lateral trail is completed? When do you expect the lateral trail to be completed and the south/PCH entrance to be opened to the public to allow coastal access – the decades-long goal of the park?
- A lateral trail running from the mouth of Potrero canyon (south/PCH end of the Canyon) to the intersection of PCH and Temescal Canyon Rd. (0.6 miles away, running along the bluff side of PCH), providing safe pedestrian access from the park to the beach pending construction of a pedestrian bridge over PCH (see below) was recommended in 2008 by the Potrero Canyon Community Advisory Committee (PCCAC) and is supported by PPCC. The trail is intended to provide a recreation connection to the beach and between two parks, and is required under the amended Coastal permit for the project

which was last approved in July 2022. However, several steps remain before the trail can be constructed. These include secured funding as well as an agreement between the City and Caltrans for use of the Caltrans right of way along PCH. Negotiations with Caltrans continue, while Federal funds for the project have been approved in the House of Representatives (thanks to Congressman Ted Lieu). Those funds must still be approved in the Senate as part of the 2023 federal budget, and additional funding will be necessary before construction begins, as the cost estimate has increased. Though the existing trail can be quickly improved for use, construction start and completion dates are currently unknown.

12) There is stagnant water throughout the middle of the entire canyon park. Is there a plan to prevent this in order to prevent Potrero from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitos, which would be a public health concern?

-- We were told there is no stagnant water. If there was some during the latter phases of landscaping and construction, it has been eliminated. There is a riparian way, so the water is always moving – never stagnant. We asked if the city's Vector Control could be made aware of Potrero and to monitor the conditions. We were told they would be. Note: Some neighbors have expressed concerns that standing water remains in the Canyon.

13) RAP staff advise that there is no funding for security at Potrero Canyon Park. The community is invited to fund its own security through private companies approved by the City/RAP. If the community wishes to use our local security companies which we know are available 24/7, what is the process of vetting them for approval?

-- We did not get clarity on the process but were promised a list of approved vendors.

14) How will the Park be secured at night with a promise from the city that NO ONE IS IN THE PARK AFTER HOURS.

-- It will not. The park gates will remain closed to entry and open for anyone inside who wishes to exit after hours, but there are no plans in place to sweep the park and ensure no one is in the park, lingering after hours.

15) Will the gates be locked from the exit side inside of the park at night not just the entrance side?

--The gates will only be locked for entry. A push bar will allow the gates to open from the inside, at any time.

16) Over the years, trash discussions with the greatest amount of general support from the community seem to have been moving the trash yard away from the homes abutting the Park along Alma Real and closer to the base of Potrero Canyon. With increased trash from the Potrero area, it can be projected that the problem as it is currently being managed will become more critical. Has this scenario to move trash to the base of Potrero been put into a firm

planning stage as it sounds as if negotiations with state and county agencies will have to take place for any plan to be implemented.

-- Currently, the plan is for the lion's share of Potrero Park trash to be hauled off.

17) Who will monitor the bathrooms that have been installed to make sure they are not inhabited after closing?

--RAP staff at the Palisades Recreation Center will be responsible for that.

18) Please address our primary concerns which are community safety and fire prevention

-- See the audio ... not all concerns are addressed, but the discussion at the meeting centered on community safety and fire prevention.

19) The original plan for the development of Potrero Canyon Park called for NO ACCESS to any of the Pacific Palisades streets, Recreation Center etc. from the upper canyon area. This was litigated and the City agreed that there would be absolutely no access except at the bottom entrances adjacent to PCH. This is a matter of public record. Why has this not been addressed and why has the city reneged on legally agreed to stipulations regarding the development and more specifically street access for Potrero Canyon Park?

-- No Comment

20) The four-foot fence that surrounds the Park is very easy to climb over. That means anyone in the Park will be able to access residential backyards, including mine. What is being done to ensure that the many homes which abut the Park are going to be safe and secure from those inside the park?

-- The four-foot fence is standard and was determined after great discussion about whether there should be no fence or a four-foot fence. Residents may wish to erect fences on their perimeter at heights allowed by the Code. The point was made that a four-foot fence will not deter anyone. There are six-foot fences at park entries.

21) Will there be dog-poop bags at trash cans in the park?

-- There will be dispensers but no poop bags. This is a *passive* park, and *not an off-leash dog park*.

22) is there still a plan to build a bridge to PCH? If so, when is that happening?

-- In addition to the lateral trail, the PCCAC recommended construction of a Pedestrian Over Crossing (POC) or bridge over PCH as a high priority for safe, direct crossing from the mouth of the canyon to the beach. PPCC also supports construction of the bridge, which is in the pre-design phase. State funding in the amount of \$11,000,000 has been secured, due to the efforts of State Senator Ben Allen and Assemblymember Richard Bloom. The current Coastal permit for the project requires the city to apply with the Coastal Commission for another permit for the pedestrian bridge, which has not yet occurred. The entire process will likely take several years and estimated construction

start and completion dates are unknown. (Note: The bridge to Will Rogers State Beach will begin next to the restrooms and lifeguard building, connecting to beach bike and pedestrian paths.)

Additional issue raised (parking & traffic):

Questions were raised as to whether restricted parking might be instituted on any of the residential rim streets if traffic increases from large numbers of park visitors. Chris Spitz (a rim resident and PPCC At-large Representative) has researched this issue and learned that the process of designating a “Preferential Parking District” under LADOT rules is complicated and difficult. Moreover, because west rim streets are located in the Coastal zone, Coastal Commission approval would be required, but since the Commission is under a mandate to provide maximum public access to coastal resources, they will be reluctant to approve restricted parking on these streets. It remains to be seen if there is a burden on residential streets due to increased recreational parking - which would be an issue not just for west rim streets but for other surrounding areas in the Palisades including the Huntington, the Business District and perhaps the Alphabet Streets. As such, the issue may be revisited depending on whether parking issues arise in the future

PLEASE SEE THE FOLLOWING “FIRE MEDIA” DOCUMENT WHICH WAS REFERENCED IN Q6 (FOR CONTEXT)

Fires – last 10+ years, PP & bluff/canyon areas (entirely within the VHFHSZ)*

“Catastrophic brush fires are occurring at an increasing rate not only in California but across the country. Hillside communities within Los Angeles are under continuous threat of a devastating wildfire. As this risk increases, it is important you protect yourself and your family by planning, preparing and staying aware.” **LAFD warning**, <https://www.lafd.org/wildfire>.

Fire 2011

<https://www.laweekly.com/pacific-palisades-brush-fire-breaks-out/>

(brush fire - bluff below Friends at mouth of Potrero)

Fire 2014

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/brush-fire-on-pacific-coast-highway/1972991/>

<https://smmirror.com/2014/01/brush-fire-closes-northbound-pacific-coast-highway-in-pacific-palisades/>

(brush fire - PCH bluff near Potrero)

Fire 2015

<https://www.palipost.com/bluffs-fire-started-by-homeless-lafd-says/>

(brush fire - Friends/Vias de las Olas bluff)

Fire 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/oct/21/los-angeles-wildfire-pacific-palisades-homes>

(large wildfire - Palisades Highlands)

Fires 2021

<https://abc7.com/brush-fire-pacific-palisades-coast-highway-california/10690124/>

(brush fire - Via de las Olas bluff)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palisades_Fire

<https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/palisades-fire-hundreds-under-evacuation-1-detained-for-questioning-in-arson-investigation/>

(massive Palisades Fire/1300+ acres – Highlands & Topanga Canyon)

<http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Recent-Wildfires.pdf>

(photos - Palisades Fire & Via de las Olas bluff brush fire)

<http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Homeless-Spot-Fires.pdf>

(photos - homeless spot fires/PCH/Potrero/Via de las Olas bluff)

Fire 2022

<https://www.circlingthenews.com/fire-races-up-corona-del-mar-contained-at-two-acres-pch-closed-over-night/#comment-23174>

<https://www.yahoo.com/video/pch-closed-pacific-palisades-due-050352059.html>

<https://www.foxla.com/news/brush-fire-closes-pch-in-pacific-palisades>

<https://ktla.com/news/local-news/1-acre-brush-fire-ignites-in-pacific-palisades/>

(brush fire - PCH bluff near mouth of Potrero)

**VHFHSZ = Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Evidence/remains of camp fires, other lit fires, smoking and fireworks are regularly detected in Palisades bluff and canyon areas by LAPD (our SLO and Beach Detail), LAFD, PP Task Force on Homelessness volunteers and residents. The threat of catastrophic brush fires from these activities is ever-present in Pacific Palisades and must be guarded against, in keeping with LAFD’s warning to the community.*