

Pedestrian Overcrossing (Bridge) Over PCH – Timeline/Key Points

2004: On May 27, 2004, the PPCC Board voted unanimously to support several aspects of Potrero Canyon park development, including “Construction of a walk bridge from the mouth of Potrero Canyon over PCH to the beach parking.”

In late 2004, the LA City Council (supported by PPCC, by the then-CD11 Councilmember and by the Mayor) appointed the Potrero Canyon Community Advisory Committee (PCCAC) – a Brown-Act committee of 16 members to make recommendations for the development and use of the proposed park in Potrero Canyon. George Wolfberg (for whom the park is now named) was appointed PCCAC Chair. Other PCCAC members included current or past PPCC Board members, officers and advisors: David Card, Chris Spitz and Rob Weber (PPCC Legal Advisor), Gil Dembo, Norma Spak and Stuart Muller.

2005: The Coastal Commission called for safe, direct access to Potrero Canyon from PCH, with a pedestrian overcrossing suggested as one of the alternatives for safe crossing (in the Coastal permit for the park project).

2005-2007: Monthly, well-attended public PCCAC meetings were held, in which the community provided input on Potrero Canyon park development. Discussions included the issue of safe, direct access across PCH between the proposed park and the beach. Alternatives discussed included: 1) a pedestrian overcrossing (bridge) over PCH (POC/bridge); 2) a signal/crosswalk below the mouth of Potrero Canyon; 3) a tunnel under PCH; and 4) walking from the park on the bluff side of PCH to the traffic signals at Temescal Canyon Park to cross Temescal Canyon Road and then cross PCH. PCCAC members and many other members of the community expressed support for the POC/bridge alternative, while many residents of the east and west rims of Potrero Canyon expressed concerns and favored other alternatives.

Regarding alternatives to the POC/bridge, the following considerations were discussed: A signal and/or crosswalk at Potrero would be less safe and create more congestion and delay for traffic on PCH. A tunnel would be unfeasible (way too many underground utilities in the right of way). And asking park goers and beach goers to hike 6/10ths of a mile to the Temescal signal would invite impatient and impulsive jay-walkers (of all ages) to attempt to run across 6+ lanes of very high speed traffic. There have been regular deaths of jay-walkers on PCH in the Palisades and Malibu, including one in Pacific Palisades a few weeks ago on February 14, 2021.

Jan. 2008: The PCCAC issued its report to the City Dept. of Recreation and Parks (RAP) and Bureau of Engineering (BOE) on community consensus for the design and recommended uses for the park at Potrero Canyon (the Report). Regarding a POC/bridge across PCH, the Report stated:

1. Bridge for Beach Access: *The Committee’s top priority is to ensure a safe crossing of Pacific Coast Highway and to prevent further pedestrian deaths. To achieve this goal, a majority of Committee members propose that a pedestrian over-crossing (bridge) be built over PCH’s six (6) lanes of high speed traffic: to allow safe, direct and unimpeded access to the beach, canyon and village for walkers, runners and bicyclists, and to avoid interfering with the flow of traffic on PCH. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in light of concerns that have been expressed by many residents, the Committee is not opposed to a further neutral assessment of the feasibility, safety and efficacy of an over-crossing as compared with other possible alternatives.*

The majority of PCCAC members supported the POC/bridge as the most direct and safest way to cross, without impeding PCH commuters. Caltrans indicated favoring the POC/bridge, for the same reasons, and it still does. Today, the POC/bridge has the support of the LA City Bureau of Engineering (BOE) and its Project Manager for the Potrero project, and the RAP officials who have been shepherding this project from the beginning. Our elected officials also support the POC/bridge: State Senator Ben Allen, Assemblymember Richard Bloom and CD 11 Councilmember Mike Bonin.

2009-present: Work on the Canyon park has been ongoing. Grading is complete, and the landscape contract bids came in and are being reviewed. Completion and opening are now expected in 2022. During this time period, the separate issue of a POC/bridge across PCH was mentioned several times in discussions at PPCC meetings, including in Sept. 2013, April & Sept. 2015, June & Oct. 2016, Jan. & Sept. 2019 and Jan. 2020 (ref. PPCC minutes: <http://pacpalicc.org/index.php/documents/>). PPCC's 2004 vote to support a walk bridge was not mentioned, but the minutes reflect that City officials and individual PCCAC and PPCC Board members expressed support for the POC/bridge while acknowledging that funding had not been secured. In 2016, the BOE cost estimate to build the bridge appeared to be \$6 million (see minutes of 10/27/16). The most recent cost estimate is \$11 million. It's unclear whether a "further neutral assessment" as mentioned in the Report has taken place. Since then and over the years, the alternatives have been assessed and discussed by RAP, BOE, Caltrans, CD 11 and individual PPCAC members, concluding that the POC/bridge is the best alternative.

April 2021: We have learned that state and local governments may apply for federal funding for local infrastructure projects. U.S. Rep. Ted Lieu has advised that each Congressman will be allowed to submit ten such projects for funding; the projects must have the support of the local community. RAP General Manager Mike Shull has asked Mayor Garcetti for authority to apply for federal funding for the proposed pedestrian bridge over PCH upon confirmation of Pacific Palisades community support. The offices of State legislators Ben Allen and Richard Bloom are also seeking funding for the bridge, and they are considering coordinating with RAP in the federal application or finding other funding from the State. The deadline for funding applications to be submitted to Congressman Lieu is April 16.

A 2/3 vote of PPCC Board members to support an application for federal funding of the POV/bridge would reflect current community consensus in support of the overcrossing (PPCC Mission Statement). The Executive Committee sponsors the motion to support POV/bridge funding for Board discussion and possible action on April 8, 2021.

By the PPCC Executive Committee, April 2, 2021