



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

July 20, 2026

Sylvia Dhimdis, BOE Project Manager, Pedestrian Bridge Project

sylvia.dhimdis@lacity.org

Juan Fregoso, District Director, Council District 11

juan.fregoso@lacity.org

Jason Jackson, Arellano Associates, Project Consultant

jjackson@arellanoassociates.com

Via email to all addressees and to BOE project email: eng.potrero canyonpedbridge@lacity.org

Re: Potrero Canyon Pedestrian Bridge Project and George Wolfberg Park Completion Requirements

Dear City Officials and Project Consultant:

Thank you for taking the time to arrange a webinar regarding this longstanding and important topic, which has advanced over more than 20 years thanks to the hard work of many different individuals, including the community members who served on the former Potrero Canyon Advisory Committee, members of PPCC, and the City officials and consultants who have devoted time to the project.

Notwithstanding the good intentions of the different parties involved in the July 16th webinar, many questions unfortunately remain unanswered, and there are misapprehensions within the community as to what is or is not required to be constructed after the opening of George Wolfberg Park – specifically, if only the pedestrian (lateral) trail to the Temescal Canyon Rd. traffic light is required, OR if a bridge over PCH is actually mandated, and/or if there is funding for the same.

The nature of the recent webinar meeting format (with chat being disabled) resulted in community members feeling that they were unable to fully participate or see the questions posed or opinions expressed by those who were not called upon by the moderator. Paramount among the concerns expressed by community members are that (1) questions about security in managing the bridge and access to the community must be addressed in a definitive (as opposed to general) manner, and (2) an explanation is needed as to why resources should be dedicated to funding the proposed bridge at a time when other important community priorities post-Palisades Fire remain unfunded. Some constituents have asked for additional clarifications in the days since the webinar, including asking about the positions that PPCC has taken over the years regarding various aspects of George Wolfberg Park and the proposed bridge. Constituents have also requested responses to the questions sent in advance of the webinar by PPCC representatives Lorie Cudzil (Area Six) and Chris Spitz (At-large), which have been shared with the community. We are very concerned that neither straightforward nor specific answers were provided during the webinar in response to those important questions. See:

<https://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Questions-for-the-City-re-Bridge-Project.pdf>.

The Palisades community is entitled to direct answers to these key questions. In an email message to Ms. Cudzil and Ms. Spitz on July 13, 2026, Arus Grigoryan of CD 11 advised that if answers were not provided at the meeting, interested persons could reach out again and request answers. We therefore respectfully request that you provide

direct and specific answers as soon as possible to each of the questions those PPCC representatives submitted.

We note that unanswered questions about the bridge project arose *well before the Palisades Fire*, as articulated in an email exchange in 2023-2024 among City officials, a Potrero Canyon rim resident and then-PPCC President Maryam Zar. After suggesting that further conversations were needed to answer open questions from “rim residents whose questions have been left unanswered for a long time,” Ms. Zar stated: on March 12, 2024 (as a follow-up to unanswered questions posed by a resident on December 9, 2023): “*Our promise to the community has always been that the outreach phase of the project would finally draw out the commentary and feedback of a wide swath of Palisadians, not just a limited few proponents of the bridge project.*” (email exchange attached below).

We also note that in your July 16th presentation and on the BOE webpage regarding the project, you have indicated that outreach meetings occurred in March 2024 and July 2026 (two meetings). In fact, BOE representatives, including Ms. Dhindiz, gave a presentation about the project at PPCC’s public meeting in October 2025 (a recording is on the PPCC website). At that time, we were told that the cost estimate to complete the bridge was between \$13 - \$18 million, depending on inflation. Again, we request a specific response to the questions about the increased cost and efforts, if any, to secure funding to complete the bridge.

In addition, the community has now had two outreach meetings from BOE about the required pedestrian trail project, in August 2024 and June 2025. When can we expect another such meeting? There are seeming contradictions about the status of the required trail – planning for which has not yet been completed nor, apparently, has Caltrans approval been secured to date, notwithstanding the project’s over \$1 million in federal earmark funds previously secured by former Pacific Palisades area US Congressman Ted Lieu. Compounding these contradictions is confusion about why the required pedestrian trail isn’t being completed *before* pursuing, let alone finalizing, the intended use of the \$11 million state grant secured by state Senator Ben Allen for the bridge – whether only for feasibility and outreach about the bridge (as noted in the last community meeting of October 23, 2025), OR for feasibility, outreach and the design phase of the proposed bridge.

To ensure that City officials, Potrero Canyon/George Wolfberg Park users, bridge project supporters, and area residents, *all* have an opportunity to be heard – and to have information transparently provided in an open public forum where participants, project leaders and City officials can be seen and heard – we would like to invite the various parties to a PPCC-moderated special meeting (similar to PPCC meetings that the PPCC Infrastructure Committee recently hosted with LADWP), to answer outstanding questions *and* review the history of the project in light of the current status of the community post-Palisades Fire. Ideally, this meeting could be scheduled for some time in late August or September.

Thereafter, to ensure community consensus, given strong feelings in the community about how best to complete the Park and/or the bridge project, including in light of the changed community conditions since the Palisades Fire and the lack of overall financial and other resources, it may also be advisable for the issues discussed in this letter to be addressed and community consensus confirmed as part of the follow-up PPCC/NORC community survey, to be undertaken on PPCC’s behalf this fall.

In the interim, we request that City officials provide a copy of the **two most recent biannual progress reports on Potrero Canyon**, as required by Special Condition 25 of the 2022 Coastal Development Permit

(such reports should have been submitted by BOE to the Coastal Commission in November 2025 and May 2026).
Thank you for your consideration and anticipated cooperation with these requests.

Sincerely,

Pacific Palisades Community Council Executive Committee
Allison Holdorff Polhill, President; Reza Akef, Vice-President; Daphne Gronich, Treasurer;
Caroline Nick, Secretary; Sue Kohl, Chair Emeritus; Christina Spitz, Elected Representative/At-large;
Jim Kirtley, Organizational Representative/Lowe Family YMCA

cc (via email):

State:

Hon. Ben Allen, State Senator
Nick Faries, District Representative, Sen. Allen
Cynthia Stein, Sr. Advisor, Governor Gavin Newsom
Tim Hayes, Psomas/Caltrans contractor

ben.allen@sen.ca.gov
nick.faries@sen.ca.gov
cynthia.stein@gov.ca.gov
tim.hayes@psomas.com

City/CD 11:

Hon. Traci Park, City Councilmember
Julio Torres, Special Projects Coordinator
Arus Grigoryan, Palisades Field Deputy

traci.park@lacity.org
julio.torres@lacity.org
arus.grigoryan@lacity.org

City/BOE:

Crystal Lee, City Engineer
Patrick Schmidt, Acting Deputy City Engineer
Kristen Ly, Project Manager/Potrero Canyon & Pedestrian Trail
Jose Beristain, Division Manager
Mary Nemick, Director of Communications
Matt Negrete, Jacobs Engineering/BOE contractor

crystal.lee@lacity.org
patrick.schmidt@lacity.org
kristen.ly@lacity.org
jose.beristain@lacity.org
mary.nemick@lacity.org
matt.negrete@jacobs.com

Attachment: 2023-24 email exchange, referenced on p. 2 above:

From: Maryam Zar <president@pacpalicc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 9:24 AM
To: [resident]; Juan Fregoso <juan.fregoso@lacity.org>; matt.negrete@jacobs.com <matt.negrete@jacobs.com>
Cc: traci.park@lacity.org <traci.park@lacity.org>; Star CD11 <star.parsamyan@lacity.org>; Gabriela Medina <gabriela.medina@lacity.org>; michael.amster@lacity.org <michael.amster@lacity.org>; Chris Spitz <ppfriends3@hotmail.com>; Kristen Ly <kristen.ly@lacity.org>; PotreroCanyonPedBridge@LACity.org <PotreroCanyonPedBridge@LACity.org>; jose.beristain@lacity.org <jose.beristain@lacity.org>; Cindy Simon <clousimon@aol.com>; PPCC PPCC <info@pacpalicc.org>
Subject: Re: Potrero Canyon Bridge Project

. . . Yes, in response to a set of inquiries (some by me as well) Gaby [former CD 11 District Director]] had responded that questions would be answered but they have not been.

Juan, would you like to have a phone call to meet . . . rim residents whose questions have been left unanswered for a long time?

Our promise to the community has always been that the outreach phase of the project would finally draw out the commentary and feedback of a wide swath of Palisadians, not just a limited few proponents of the bridge project.

Best, Maryam.

On Mar 12, 2024, at 1:08 PM, [resident] wrote:

I am following up on an email I sent in December. Gabby informed me that she would be addressing all the questions below; however, she left her position without doing so. I have included Juan Fregoso again, as well as the contacts at Jacobs Engineering.

I look forward to hearing from you.

On Saturday, December 9, 2023 at 11:27:12 AM PST, [resident] wrote:

Thank you for organizing the community zoom meeting regarding the bridge project! These conversations are very important, especially because prior outreach efforts were lacking. However, I must tell you that I was extremely disappointed that the meeting began with Councilwoman Park's statement, **"The bridge is required by the Coastal Commission for the completion of the George Wolfberg Potrero Canyon Park." This is false. The Coastal Commission said that the Lateral Trail is required, so this misinformation significantly influenced the direction of the zoom, especially the public comment portion.**

Also, Gaby said the bridge and the lateral trail fulfill two separate requirements under the Coastal permit. What exactly are these two separate requirements? The Coastal Commission staff told us that the lateral trail satisfies all the CCS requirements. This contradicting information caused confusion and lead to a completely different conversation. If you find that the lateral trail does meet all the requirements, and is mandated, please explain why you feel both are necessary.

There is a lot of history of the previous CD11 administration, and the City giving residents misinformation, which is why **it's important, given your commitment to transparency, that you give out correct information, and when there is a mistake, that you find a way to publicly correct it.**

Why are you relying on an outdated 2016 feasibility study DRAFT that doesn't mention that the lateral trail is mandated? I assume this exclusion significantly influenced the initial feasibility study. This study estimated the bridge would cost \$4.5 million and the trail would cost \$1.1 million. However, by 2019, the estimate of the bridge jumped to \$11 million! What will the projected cost be when construction begins in 2027-28? **These questions justify a new feasibility study** to decide whether the bridge should remain a priority, given the increasing cost and potential allocation for public funds in park-poor communities. I also believe this feasibility study should be conducted by an impartial third party who isn't invested in this project.

How do you plan to proceed if you find the bridge construction will cost more than \$11 million? The required lateral trail is likely to exceed the 2016 estimate of \$1.1 million, which is also concerning. How do you plan to secure funding, if these expenses exceed the estimated amounts? Transparency regarding the costs and budget are crucial, especially considering the history of significant budget overruns.

I am deeply concerned about the credibility and objectivity of using Jacobs Engineering for the environmental studies above Potrero trail below Via De Las Olas where the landslides occurred, especially after Gaby said you would not be using the BOE geological report. We have unsuccessfully been trying to obtain information, and would like to know if any steps have been taken to adhere to the BOE's recommendations. **This area is part of the George Wolfberg Potrero Canyon Park, and the BOE found the bulkhead holding up Via De Las Olas is undermined. The community has been seeking answers for months. This lack of transparency is unacceptable.**

Residents are also concerned about the potential traffic on PCH, Temescal, Chautauqua, Channel Road and Sunset Boulevard during the five years it will take to construct the bridge. **Will there be a traffic impact study?** The potential for gridlock is enormous, and this must be taken into consideration when you outweigh the pros and cons of this bridge project. I also believe the repeated **claims that the bridge will serve as a fire escape during wildfires**

is dangerous and irresponsible. This advice contradicts the advice I received from Station 69, who said they will be advising residents how and when to evacuate, and that walking or running through a high severity fire zone could pose serious risks.

I believe addressing these issues and correcting the misinformation that was given will show transparency, and will help with the community's understanding about the bridge project.

Thank you for your attention to these matters, and I look forward to hearing from you! Thank you!

[from resident]

End Attachment