



July 22, 2019

Stacy Radine Bradley, AICP
Deputy Director of Planning, Capital and Planning Division
San Francisco Recreation and Park Department

Re: GREAT HIGHWAY CLOSURE IMPACTS to SF Zoo Access and Parking
SF PUC Basis of Design. June 25, 2019 Draft
Initial Review and Recommendations

Dear Stacy

Big thank you to the SF Rec and Park team for the explorations of options for replacing the entrances (ingress/egress) for SF Zoo visitors due to the pending Great Highway closure. We have had the opportunity to consider the preliminary plans and memo prepared by SFPUC and provided on June 25th by SF Rec Park and reviewed together with you, SF Rec Park and SFPUC on June 26th, 2019.

We understand that we are reviewing the conceptual proposal for access to the Zoo and Zoo parking lot as a part of the City's **Ocean Beach Long-Term Improvements Project**. Based on our review we see critical issues with the proposal and a lack of understanding of key Zoo operational issues and plans. We can provide preliminary feedback on the presented material, but we look forward meeting with the transportation consultants and City team for our final clear directional feedback.

Based on review of the conceptual proposal for the Sloat Blvd entrance, the SF Zoological Society does not support the Sloat Blvd ingress/egress expansion. Overall, we do not support any option that increases the intensity of vehicular activity between Sloat Blvd and the Zoo property beyond existing conditions.

The main reasons for this recommendation are summarized as follows:

- San Francisco Zoo's Strategic Plan (including the expression of the "One Narrative", attached) prioritizes redeploying the Zoo's western portion into a Coastal Conservation Zone based upon the Zoo's 4 C's: Care, Connection, Conservation, and our local Pacific and Ocean Beach Coast. The proposed option increases Zoo coastal zone traffic that undermines this Zoo priority.
- Reorienting all vehicle ingress and egress traffic of the parking lot to the Sloat Blvd. entrance will add to traffic congestion on Sloat Blvd. This increase in vehicular traffic will negatively impact the Zoo's neighbors with more traffic congestion, noise, and bike and pedestrian conflicts. In addition, by restricting parking lot entrances to a single access point, traffic congestion on Sloat Blvd. and within the parking lot will negatively impact Zoo patrons. The Zoo does not support such negative impacts on our neighbors.



- The way-finding and entrance experience are critical for attracting Zoo patrons from San Francisco, the Peninsula and beyond. Many Zoo patrons park outside the parking lot and walk into the Zoo. The proposals do not include enough information for our feedback. For example, in reviewing Layout 1, it is unclear whether the width of the pedestrian entrance is narrowed, or if trees and plants are removed. The Zoo depends on new and returning patrons and this proposal may frustrate and discourage Zoo visitors, thus threatening Zoo attendance and revenue.
- Two alternatives for ingress/egress on Herbst/Zoo Road for are aligned with the Zoological Society's planning vision and greatly mitigate neighborhood impacts. In the concept proposal presented there was a short narrative paragraph and no concept drawings for this alternative. We recommend an equal level proposal for the Herbst/Zoo Road parking lot entrance. We are currently developing solutions for the animal crossing which will be available soon.
- For the amount of funds associated with proposed expansion of the Zoo's Sloat Blvd entrance into the sole ingress/egress, either of the Zoo Road options provide more environmentally conservation-oriented solutions that are also aligned with the Zoo's conservation and operational planning vision. This redirection of the funding would mitigate the impact of the loss of the Great Highway access while sustaining the Ocean Beach / South Sunset residential neighborhood character. This seems like a better use of public funds.

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The Zoological Society supports either of the Herbst/Zoo Road alternatives as they support our long-term plans, including moving development away from the coastal zone. The Zoo is a primary stakeholder in the Sunset District and the south Ocean Beach area, on par with City departments. The long-term project creates significant impacts on the Zoo's operations. Zoo access should be a primary consideration of the long-term project.

Regarding the SFPUC verbal request on June 26th, 2019 for the Zoological Society to provide further, detailed and quantitative assessment as part of the project critique, we defer to SF Rec Park to confirm the value of this additional information. Please note that the Zoological Society has already forward much available visitor/vehicular data as the capacities and impacts to the approved Master Plan and EIR.

Due to the fundamental issues with the Sloat Blvd vehicular expansion option, coupled with the availability of better alternatives, additional detailed study seems to be an unnecessary cost and has a low probability to alter the Society's recommendations. But if helpful for SF Rec Park, the Zoological Society will support RecPark funded efforts to collect additional data for the Sloat option as well.



Thank you for recognizing that the larger perspective remains critical to the Zoological Society. As this project deals with long-term ecological, conservation, community impacts, we appreciate and encourage the development of thoughtful and holistic solution that puts the natural and humanity concerns at the forefront of any short-term tactical solutions to road closure and traffic redirection.

This recommendation herein represents the perspective of the Zoological Society.

We do appreciate and respect the efforts of SF Rec Park and the SF PUC to facilitate a solution and remain a committed teammate in the conservation effort.

Your patience, understanding and consideration is greatly appreciated.

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Joe Fitting
Deputy Director
San Francisco Zoological Society

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark R Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark R Miller, FAIA
Campus Architect
Co-Chair Design and Construction Committee
San Francisco Zoological Society

Enc: SF Zoological Society (DRAFT) "One Narrative" v. 4.19.2019