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**Greater Griffith Park
Neighborhood Council**
*Your Neighborhood. Your Voice.
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Certified Council #35**

February 25, 2010

**To: Councilmember Tom LaBonge, Chair, Arts, Parks Health & Aging Council Committee
Councilmember Ed Reyes, Member
Councilmember Herb Wesson, Member**

From: Charley Mims, President and Boardmembers, Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council

**Re: The Three-Year Plan to Fiscal Sustainability
Containing CAO Recommendations Impacting Recreation and Parks, in the City Budget
Fiscal Year 2010-2011
CAO File No. 0590-00098-3842
Council File No. 09-0600-S159**

At its duly noticed meeting on February 16, 2010, the Board of the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council, resolved to make the following comments on the proposed cuts to the Recreation and Parks Department's Operating Budget for 2010-2011 set forth in the CAO's "Three-Year Plan to Fiscal Sustainability." The substantial cuts in funding combined with the levying of millions in new fees for heretofore free water and power used at park properties, new liability for pension costs heretofore not charged to the department, and privatization of revenue-producing assets such as golf courses whose profits heretofore have been folded into the department's operating budget, will drastically reduce recreation and services in the City's parks to levels that that will have long term consequences for the maintenance of parks as viable public resources.

1. THE GGPNC OPPOSES all recommendations in the section entitled:

CITY RESTRUCTURING PROPOSALS
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS
REIMBURSEMENT OF GENERAL FUND COSTS

Part one of this section proposes that the Recreation and Parks Department be required to pay fees for LADWP water and power usage at each of its more than 400 properties. This will result in the loss of an estimated \$20 million from the Department's operating budget and the equivalent cuts in public services.

This new and one-way expense recovery plan is patently unfair. Almost from the inception of the municipal park system, the parks have provided cost-free locations for the DWP infrastructure required for the acquisition, transfer, storage and delivery of water and power to the city. The DWP pays Recreation and Parks NO FEES for its use of recreational lands. In exchange for free use, the DWP has historically provided water and power free to municipal parks. If Recreation and Parks is required to pay for water and power, the DWP must be required to pay market lease rates to Recreation and Parks for the acreage they are currently using without payment.

Currently in Griffith Park, 44-acres of dedicated parkland, the Headworks, are being removed permanently from recreational use without monetary compensation and converted into a new DWP emergency water storage facility for Northeast L.A. (replacing Silver Lake reservoir). Currently, the DWP is excavating Griffith Park to a fifty-foot depth to replace the 96" diameter River Supply Conduit pipes running its length which bring water to city areas south of the park. During this 3-year project, which began in

Spring of 2009, public access, recreational events and the park itself have and will be constrained without monetary compensation. For almost a century, DWP electrical relay towers have crossed Griffith Park delivering power from the valley to the basin, a continuing DWP use of parkland without monetary compensation.

Part two proposes that the Recreation and Parks Department be required to pay its pension liabilities at the rate of 10% in 2010 ramping up to 50% in five years.

These new multi-faceted liabilities include retirement costs, Medicare and the Civilian Flex Program. They are certain to grow subtracting ever greater amounts from the operating budget and its ability to provide recreational services. In 2010-11 alone, the cost to the Department is projected at \$37.2 million – 25% of the entire department budget.

2. THE GGPNC OPPOSES all recommendations related to the Department of Recreation and Parks in the section entitled:

CITY RESTRUCTURING PROPOSALS
CONSOLIDATE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF CAPITAL PROJECTS

This proposal removes the Advance Planning Division from the Department of Recreation and Parks, requires that it employ the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) to provide these fundamental services and pay the BOE for same. This will reduce the operating funds available for recreation services and will precipitate delays and additional expense in the planning and construction of projects that Recreation and Parks now handles internally, (such as a simple playground or drainage ditch, to the major wash-out repair of Vista del Valle mountain road in Griffith Park). The BOE is not parks-centric and will be slower to respond, delaying action in situations that may be urgent in terms of public safety.

3. THE GGPNC OPPOSES efforts to privatize the Municipal Golf Courses or to redirect any revenue from these public-owned Golf Courses away from the Department of Recreation and Parks.

CITY RESTRUCTURING PROPOSALS
PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP - GOLF OPERATIONS

City golf courses have comparable or better conditioned and offer more competitive rates that service a greater percentage of the population than the majority of private courses and private-public-partnership courses such as is the case with the County of Los Angeles. Revenue from the City's golf courses returns directly to the Department of Recreation and Parks. Privatization provides an opportunity for that revenue stream to be redirected elsewhere. Privatization changes the mission of the golf courses from services-centered to profit-centered and opens up these facilities to unforeseen alternate uses in the name of profit.