3.14 RECREATION

The Zoo is a unique attraction within Griffith Park and the greater Los Angeles area. The proposed Project is expected to increase visitation to the Zoo and surrounding area, creating the potential for additional use and physical deterioration of recreational facilities, including those within the Zoo and Griffith Park. Additionally, proposed expansion to the Zoo and associated recreational facilities could result in physical impacts to the surrounding environment. However, proposed expansion in visitor-serving areas and public parkland would accommodate the projected increase in use, reducing potential for adverse impacts. Therefore, impacts to recreational facilities from the Project would be less than significant.

This section addresses recreational facilities that would be affected by the Los Angeles Zoo Vision Plan (Vision Plan) in the City of Los Angeles (City). The analysis describes the regulatory setting, the existing conditions at the Zoo and vicinity, and the potential impact of the implementation of the Vision Plan (Project) on recreational facilities. Impact analysis considers the potential for physical detriment or reduction in access to existing recreational facilities and whether development of new recreational facilities would significantly affect the environment.

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

Regulatory Setting

State and local laws and regulations have been enacted to ensure adequate provision of recreational facilities in the City. There are no federal regulations that apply to the Project.

State Regulations

Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477)

The Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) was established in 1965 by the California Legislature to set forth provisions in the State Subdivision Map Act for the dedication of parkland (e.g., dedication ratio of three acres per 1,000 population) and/or payment of in-lieu fees as a condition of approval of certain types of residential development projects. The Quimby Act allows local agencies, such as the City, to establish ordinances that require residential subdivision developers to pay impact fees, which can be used to purchase and develop land and/or recreational facilities.
Local Regulations

City Quimby Code

To implement the Quimby Act, the City has two primary regulations. The Park and Recreation Site Acquisition and Development Provisions, including the Subdivision Fees Trust, are established in Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 17.12. A separate park impact fee, the Zone Change Park Fee, is established in Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 12.33 and applies to the finalization of zoning changes for multi-unit residential projects. Fee schedules, collections, and administration under the Subdivision Fees Trust and the Zone Change Park Fee programs are identical. Together, these programs are colloquially referred to as the City’s “Quimby Code” and apply to residential project only. Most residential development projects that request a subdivision or zoning change within the City are required to either dedicate land for recreation and park purposes or pay an in-lieu fee (Quimby fees). Quimby fees can only be spent, and land can only be dedicated, within a service radius of 1 to 2 miles from the development that paid the fee, per the City’s Quimby Code. Collected fees must be used to acquire new parkland or fund capital improvements at existing parks and may not be used to offset staff operation and maintenance costs. The City’s Quimby Code is administered by the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP).

Los Angeles Regional Park and Open Space District

Los Angeles Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) is a special district to improve the safety of recreation areas for children and seniors, prevent gangs by increasing the safety of neighborhood parks, planting trees, and acquiring, restoring, and preserving beach, park, wildlife, and open space resources throughout Los Angeles County. RPOSD was formed following voter approval of Proposition A - the Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition - in 1992. Proposition A passed with a 64 percent approval by County of Los Angeles voters. Proposition A both formed the RPOSD and established a dedicated funding source (e.g., property assessment on approximately 2.25 million parcels) for capital improvements for park and recreational facilities, funding to all cities and unincorporated areas, and support for specific city projects that meet established eligibility criteria.

In 1996, the County of Los Angeles enacted an amendment to Proposition A of 1992 to levy an additional assessment within the RPOSD and placed Proposition A of 1996 on the general election ballot. Again, voters passed the initiative with a 65.1 percent vote. Most recently, in 2016, the County of Los Angeles initiated and passed Measure A - the Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks Measure - with a 75 percent vote. Measure A replaces and improves upon expired funding from Proposition A of 1992 and 1996 and authorizes continued dedicated local funding for grant projects and their maintenance. Measure A enacted an annual parcel tax of 1.5 cents per square foot of improved property to fund RPOSD projects and grants.
**Proposition K**

In 1996, Proposition K was passed by City voters and created a citywide assessment district that would generate 25 million dollars each year for a period of 30 years. Funds generated from Proposition K assessments are to be used for capital improvement projects involving the acquisition, development, improvement, or restoration of park and recreational facilities in the City. Through a separate process, a portion of the Proposition K funds provide annual maintenance resources for such facilities. Proposition K requires almost 20 percent of the 750 million dollars assessment to be distributed over a 30-year period through an open and competitive process to eligible governmental agencies, City departments, and nonprofit organizations.

**City of Los Angeles General Plan**

The City of Los Angeles General Plan serves as the foundational guide for planning, outlining how land is used and how the City allocates its resources. It also serves as the vision for how the City will evolve, reflecting the values and priorities of its communities. Two elements of the General Plan addressing the goals and vision of City recreational resources are the Open Space Element and Public Facilities and Services Element.

*Open Space Element*

Adopted in 1973, the Open Space Element, titled Open Space Plan, is an element of the City’s General Plan providing guidance on the identification, preservation, conservation, and acquisition of open space in the City. Open space may be privately or publicly owned and is defined as land which is essentially free of structures and buildings and/or is natural in character and functions in one or more of the following ways:

- Provides opportunities for recreation and education;
- Preserves scenic, cultural, or historic values;
- Conserves or preserves natural resources or ecologically important areas;
- Provides or preserves lands for managed production of natural resources;
- Protects or provides for the public health and safety;
- Enhances the economic base of the City;
- Preserves or creates community scale and identity; and
- Buffers or defines activity areas.
In accordance with Article 10.5 of the California Government Code, the City Open Space Plan defines open space lands as lands which are both devoted to open space use and so designated. The Open Space Plan also defines open space use in accordance with the definition provided at the time when the plan was first adopted, the 1972 State of California Government Code. From this definition, open space use means the use of essentially unimproved land or water for (1) preservation of natural resources, (2) managed production of resources, (3) outdoor recreation, and (4) public health and safety.

The Open Space Plan establishes, goals, policies, standards, and criteria for open space resources within them including:

- **Goal:** To insure the preservation and conservation of sufficient open space to serve the recreational, environmental, health and safety needs of the City.

- **Recreation Standard:** Six acres of land per 1000 persons should be provided for regional parks.

**Public Facilities and Services Element:** Public Recreation Plan

The Public Recreation Plan of the Public Facilities and Services Element sets forth objective and standards intended to provide a basis for satisfying the needs for neighborhood and community recreational sites. This element of the General Plan defines a community recreational site as a site designed to serve the residents of all ages in several surrounding neighborhoods that provides facilities to serve the interests of surrounding neighborhoods. Community recreational sites typically offer baseball diamonds, football and soccer fields, tennis and handball courts, swimming pools, in addition to the facilities provided for a neighborhood site. Specialized facilities may be needed to meet the needs of the community.

As defined in this element of the General Plan, a Regional Park is generally over 50 acres in size and provides specialized recreational facilities such as lakes, golf courses, campgrounds, wilderness areas and museums, which normally serve persons living throughout the Los Angeles basin. A regional park may include or emphasize, exceptional scenic attractions. A regional park may also contain the types of facilities provided in neighborhood and community recreational sites.

The Plan also establishes satisfactory recreation systems must provide sufficient land area to be used for recreation, recreation areas must be properly distributed, and recreation areas...
across the City must be equipped with appropriate and diverse facilities to meet the recreational needs of groups of all ages and abilities.

**Hollywood Community Plan**

In the City, 35 community plans serve as the Land Use Element of the General Plan and coupled with the City’s Framework Element, guide long-term land use, growth, and development. The Zoo lies within the Hollywood Community Plan area, which includes the neighborhoods of Hollywood, various Hollywood Hills communities, Los Feliz, East Hollywood, and Griffith Park, among others. The Hollywood Community Plan that is currently in effect was adopted in 1988. Per the 1988 Hollywood Community Plan, it is the City’s policy that the desires of the local residents be considered in the planning of recreational facilities, including the following goals:

1. That recreational facilities, programs and procedures be tailored to the social, economic, and cultural characteristics of individual neighborhoods and that these programs and procedures be continually monitored.

2. That existing recreational sites and facilities be upgraded through site improvements, rehabilitation and reuse of sound structures, and replacement of obsolete structures, as funds become available.

3. That, in the absence of public land, and where feasible, intensified use of existing facilities and joint use of other public facilities for recreational purposes be encouraged.

4. That the expansion of existing recreational sites and the acquisition of new sites be planned so as to minimize the displacement of housing and the relocation of residents.

A community plan update process is actively underway. A 2012 update to the Hollywood Community Plan had become effective on August 6, 2012, but a legal challenge to its EIR caused the City to revert to the 1988 Hollywood Community Plan and zoning regulations. In 2018, a new EIR, referred to as the Hollywood Community Plan Update (HCUP2) was published. As of December 2019, the new draft plan has been presented to stakeholders and City Council. Adoption of the HCUP2 is expected to occur in 2020. If approved, the HCUP2 would implement the following goals and policies applicable to parks and recreational facilities:

**Goal PR.4: Quality public facilities that serve the community.**

- **PR4.1: Adequate parks and recreation facilities.** Provide adequate park and recreational facilities that meet the recreational needs of existing and new residents for all age-groups in the community.
- **PR4.2: Parks and recreational spaces.** Conserve, maintain, and better utilize recreational facilities and park spaces.
3.14. Recreation

- **PR4.3: Community-serving facilities.** Encourage the provision of community facilities and open space within private discretionary projects. Such facilities could include those to be used for classes, bicycle amenities, adult and child daycare, community meetings and other community purposes.

- **PR4.4: Parking at community facilities.** Allow community-serving facilities to utilize alternative means of providing required parking.

- **PR4.5: Open space designations.** Maintain all open space designations within the Hollywood Community Plan Area. Designate parkland as Open Space as it is acquired by the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP).

**Goal PR.5:** Improved access to recreation facilities and open space.

- **PR5.4 Joint use agreements.** Support the establishment of joint-use-agreements with other public and private entities to increase recreational opportunities in Hollywood, including shared dues of land owned.

**Other Planning Documents**

While not directly applicable to the Zoo, several plans address recreation in Griffith Park and have been considered in this analysis for context in impact assessment and significance thresholds.

*1978 Griffith Park Master Plan (Non-adopted Local Plan)*

Released in 1978, the Griffith Park Master Plan, although not formally adopted, is used to guide the future of Griffith Park (City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks 1978). Intended as a “comprehensive physical plan and management program that addresses both the problems of the present and the expectations of the future,” the document contains broadly defined objectives as well as specific projects, including an electric trolley along Crystal Springs Drive and Zoo Drive, entrance enhancements, and other capital projects. Although not all of the specific projects identified were implemented, the following overall objectives of the 1978 Griffith Park Master Plan are applicable:

1. Enhance the beauty and the scale of the vast natural areas of the park where scenic and open space values should predominate.
2. Improve the visual and environmental quality of the developed recreation areas at the entries and around the perimeter of the park.
3. Make more efficient use of existing facilities and developed areas before using more open parklands for new facilities.
4. Continue and improve the established civic function of Griffith Park.
5. Improve the parkwide transportation system for more efficient movement of people and the potential recreation experience it can provide.
6. Give higher priority to essential park operations in future planning, especially those operations that enable the public to more closely relate to basic park values.
2009 Griffith Park Wildlife Management Plan

Until 2007, few formal wildlife surveys had ever been conducted in Griffith Park, and there was little data available on its species. After a wildfire destroyed 800 acres of the park in May 2007, the City retained a biological consulting firm to document the park’s biodiversity, and to provide recommendations for future management of the park’s natural resources. The Griffith Park Wildlife Management Plan was adopted in January 2009. The plan includes wildlife management goals and recommendations to ensure future co-existence between the rich diversity of wildlife species supported by Griffith Park and the thousands of human visitors to the park each year. Among the goals identified in the Draft Griffith Park Wildlife Management Plan, those applicable to the Project include:

- Promote native wildlife populations and habitat,
- Identify and defend native vegetation and biological "hot spots,"
- Clarify the location and usage of wildlife corridors;
- Minimize human/wildlife conflict,
- Strengthen law enforcement,
- Reduce "edge effects,"
- Manage recreation to avoid conflicts with wildlife; and
- Promote environmental education among the park’s staff and park users.

2013 Vision Plan for Griffith Park

A Griffith Park Working Group made up of council district appointees, homeowner group representatives, neighborhood council members, and representatives of other organizations was convened to develop a Draft Vision Plan for Griffith Park, which was released for public review in 2013 by RAP. The Vision Plan for Griffith Park was created for the purpose of providing guidance to developments within Griffith Park until the development and adoption of a full Griffith Park master plan.

Chapter 1 of the Vision Plan for Griffith Park emphasizes Griffith Park’s Urban Wilderness Identity and role as a natural refuge within an intense urban environment. Chapter 1 contains a number of goals and objectives for maintaining this Urban Wilderness Identity through a balance of natural resource preservation and management of recreational use of Griffith Park. Policies relevant to recreational use of Griffith Park include:

- **Goal A.** Manage the entirety of the park consistent with the park’s Urban Wilderness identity.
- **Objective 4.** Promote natural qualities, minimize new urban intrusions in the Wilderness Area, and provide for informal recreation.

Chapter 2 of the Draft Vision Plan for Griffith Park does not contain formal goals and policies Wilderness Area of the park but does recognize the historical legacy of Colonel Griffith’s gift,
the existing user groups, and the need for the equitable provision of active and passive recreational opportunities. The following introduction is therefore pertinent:

**Existing Conditions**

**Regional Setting**

**City of Los Angeles**

The operation and management of City parks and recreation facilities, including Griffith Park, is carried out by RAP. Within the City, RAP stewards over 16,000 acres of parkland and 444 park sites, which include open space and active recreation amenities. RAP is responsible for the operation and maintenance of hundreds of athletic fields, 422 playgrounds, 321 tennis courts, 184 recreation centers, 72 fitness areas, 62 swimming pools and aquatic centers, 30 senior centers, 26 skate parks, 13 golf courses, 12 museums, 9 dog parks, and 187 summer youth camps located within the City (RAP 2019).

**City of Glendale**

The City of Glendale, located adjacent to the Zoo east of the Los Angeles River, owns and manages 5,034 acres of natural open space and approximately 281.4 acres of parks and recreational facilities (City of Glendale 2019a). Two of the 34 parks managed by the City of Glendale, are greater than 30 acres (30.40 acres and 38.18 acres), qualifying them as regional parks. Facilities and amenities available for public use through Glendale Parks include splash pads, wading pools, community pools, skate parks, basketball parks, gymnasiums, soccer fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts (indoor and outdoor), horseshoes and a golf course (City of Glendale 2016). The Glendale Sports Complex provides several of these amenities and is also home to the "Mountain Do" trail and the Catalina Verdugo Trail trailhead. Over 30 miles of fire roads and 7.5 miles of single-track trails are utilized by joggers, dog-walkers, and mountain bikers – particularly in Brand Park and Deukmejian Wilderness Park (City of Glendale 2019b).

The current Trails and Open Space program, sponsored by the non-profit Glendale Parks & Open Space Foundation, consists of six elements: The Restoration Program, Interpretive Program, Trail Maintenance Crew, Trail Safety Patrol, the Iris Gardeners, and the GO! (Glendale Outdoors!) Program, a children’s educational outdoor program (Glendale Parks
and Open Space Foundation 2019). Sites and museums available for public tours include Catalina Verdugo Adobe, Casa Adobe de San Rafael Park, Shoesian Whispering Pine Teahouse and Friendship Garden, and Doctor’s House Museum and Gazebo (City of Glendale Community Services and Parks 2019).

**City of Burbank**

The City of Burbank, located north of the Zoo, operates and maintains 26 public parks and provides recreation service programs that include special interest classes; youth and adult sports programs; day camps; afterschool programs; youth resource programs; environmental and educational nature programs; cultural arts activities, including visual and performing arts; commercial recreation services; volunteer programs for residents of all ages; and year-round special events (City of Burbank 2019).

In 2010, there were approximately 7.1 acres of parkland for every 1,000 Burbank residents (AECOM 2013). When broken down by park type, park inventory translated to 5.84 acres of regional parks, 0.69 acre of community parks, 0.54 acre of neighborhood parks, and 0.02 acre of pocket parks per 1,000 residents. Although Burbank maintains more than 7 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, most of this is in the form of regional parks where acreage is unimproved and difficult to access, especially regional parks located in the Verdugo Mountains, as opposed to parks located in flatter areas of the city.

**Los Angeles River**

The Los Angeles River, located adjacent to the Zoo east across Zoo Drive and Crystal Springs Drive, is open for public recreational purposes at two segments of the river referred to as the Recreation Zone. These are the 1.7-mile Elysian Valley River Recreation Zone and the 2-mile Sepulveda Basin River Recreation Zone (Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority 2019). The Elysian Valley River Recreation Zone is located approximately 3.5 miles southeast of the Zoo in the Elysian Valley neighborhood. At designated recreation zones the public is allowed to launch non-motorized and steerable boats such as kayaks or canoes into the river. Several organizations provide rentals and guided tours of the River Recreation Zone. Specialty kayak programs are available for developmentally disabled children and adults through use of custom, boat-accessible walkers, and wheelchairs. Visitors may also fish or engage in nature walking and enjoy native habitat and wildlife surrounding the river.
Griffith Park

Within the City, Griffith Park, located on the east of the Santa Monica Mountain range and spanning over 4,511 acres, is one of the largest municipal parks with an urban wilderness in the U.S. and the largest regional open space within the City. Griffith Park is open to the public from 5:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. daily. Griffith Park’s urban wilderness setting and trail network spanning over 70 miles make it a popular destination for hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Within the open spaces and hiking areas, bridle trails, hiking paths, and mountain roads close at sunset. Dogs are allowed off-leash in designated areas. Other passive recreation facilities provided by Griffith Park include picnicking areas and cafes where food is available for purchase.

Children’s playgrounds are spread throughout the park, typically located near picnicking areas so that families can sit and relax while their children play. The playground nearest to the Project site is located approximately 3.9 miles northeast at the Ferrano Fields Active recreation facilities provided by Griffith Park include two 18-hole golf courses, two 9-hole golf courses, three tennis complexes, a swimming pool, soccer and rugby fields and special areas designated for badminton, baseball and softball. Griffith Park also provides reservable campgrounds for organized groups of 50 or more (City of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation 2017).

In addition to traditional recreational amenities, Griffith Park is also home to several cultural and scientific institutions that offer both important and unique recreational opportunities, attracting both residents and tourists alike. Among these include the Autry Museum of Western Heritage, Ferndell Nature Museum, Travel Town Transportation Museum. These amenities respectively provide visitors the educational opportunity to learn more about the American West’s heritage, the natural environment of Griffith Park while hiking public trails, and history of locomotives and railroad cars. Sightseeing opportunities within Griffith Park include the iconic Hollywood Sign and the Bronson Caves, which were used in the filming of many popular movies and accessible to guests by a hiking trail. The Greek Theatre regularly hosts events and concerts accessible with ticket purchase. Children may also enjoy pony rides, the merry-go-round, and a ride-on a scale model or miniature train during their visit (via the Southern Railroad or Travel Town Railroad, respectively).

The Los Angeles Zoo and the Los Angeles Equestrian Center, although managed separately from Griffith Park itself, are geographically within the park’s boundaries. The Equestrian Center provides an area for member of Los Angeles County space to enjoy and participate in
equestrian related activities and competitions (The Los Angeles Equestrian Center). Recreational opportunities of the Los Angeles Zoo are described in detail further below.

In May 2016, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation published the *Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment* representing efforts to document existing parks and recreation facilities in cities and unincorporated communities and to use these data to create a paradigm for determining the scope, scale, and location of park need in Los Angeles County. To fully and accurately assess park need throughout the 88 incorporated cities and over 2,600 square miles of unincorporated area, the county was divided into 189 study areas, each analyzed through five park metrics: Park Land, Park Access, Park Pressure, Park Amenities, Park Condition. Griffith Park fell under the Study Area of North Hollywood (along with Carlton Way Pocket Park, Las Palmas Senior Citizen Center, Selma Park, Yucca Community Center, Dorothy J. and Benjamin B. Smith Park, Highland Camrose Park, Runyon Canyon Park and Wattles Garden Park). While the assessment concluded North Hollywood had a moderate park need, it was determined that Griffith Park alone provides 41.8 park acres per 1,000 residents. The *Los Angeles Countywide Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment* calculated that Griffith Park experiences low park pressure within its community of North Hollywood and currently provides 6.91 acres of regional parkland per 1,000 people in a 25-mile radius. (Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation 2016).

### Table 3.14-1. Griffith Park Recreational Facilities and Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Operating Hours</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Travel Town Museum              | Weekdays: 10:00-4:00 P.M.  
Weekends (March-October): 10:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.  
Weekends (November-February): 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. | Donations Appreciated Small fee for Miniature Train Ride |
| Pony Rides                      | Winter Hours: Tuesday- Sunday 10:00 A.M. -4:00 P.M.  
Summer Hours: Tuesday-Friday 10:00 A.M.- 5:00 P.M. | $5                                         |
| Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum | Sunday (excluding Sunday before Memorial Day and first Sunday in October): 11:00 A.M.- 3:00 P.M. | Suggested donation: $3                     |
| Griffith Observatory           | Tuesday- Friday: 12:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.  
Saturday-Sunday: 10:00 A.M. – 10:00 P.M.  
Mondays: Closed                  | Free                                        |
| Griffith Park Merry-Go-Round    | 11:00 A.M.- 5:00 P.M. weekends throughout the year and weekdays during the summer and Christmas and Easter vacations | $2                                         |
| Autry National Center Museum    | Tuesday- Friday: 10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.  
Saturday- Sunday: 10:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.  
Monday- Closed except Martin Luther King Jr. Day and President’s Day | Adults: $14  
Students and Seniors: $10  
Children (3-12): $6  
Children under 3: Free          |
| Greek Theater                  | Varies                                                                           | Varies                                     |
**Project Area and Vicinity**

The Project area is situated in the northeast of Griffith Park, located immediately west of the Autry Museum of the American West, North of the Wilson and Harding Golf Course, and surrounded by several of the park’s hiking trails, including Skyline Trail, Condor Trail, and Mineral Wells Trail. The Zoo serves as one of many recreational attractions in Griffith Park. Most attractions within Griffith Park are maintained by RAP; the Zoo, however, is owned and managed by the City.

The Zoo serves as an important community recreational site as defined by the Public Facilities and Services Element of the City’s General Plan through its location in a designated open space/recreational area and contribution of recreational opportunities available to Los Angeles residents. The Zoo is open to the public every day from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 364 days of the year (closed on December 25). Visitors of the Zoo can view over 1,400 mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles representing more than 270 different species from all over the world. Zoo guests can enjoy nearly 20 different weekly tours and shows, such as the elephant care demonstration. The 2017-2018 Fiscal year brought in a total of 1,802,387 Zoo visitors, although annual attendance rates have fluctuated in inclines and declines over the past 20 years. 89 percent of Zoo visitors are residents of Los Angeles County that reside within a 60-minute drive time from the Zoo, while the remaining 11 percent of visitors are tourists. The Zoo also serves the unique recreation needs of its membership, including families who visit the Zoo regularly with children to visit animals and play in the nature-based playground currently located in the upper western edge of the Project area.

In addition to regular hours of operation, the Zoo also hosts special events and educational programming (Table 3.2), including field trips for students of local schools, daytime children’s camps during select days in winter and summer months when school is out, and overnight camping programs to families through Creature Camp Out and Wild Wonder Family Slumber programs. Zoopendous nights, an overnight weekend program is offered for Cub Scout, Brownie, Junior Girl Scout, or community/school groups with children aged 6-12. Groups can tour the Zoo after dark, camp within the Zoo overnight, and meet the Zoo’s animal ambassadors in the morning. During winter months, the Zoo extends operating hours to 10:00 P.M. for its seasonal L.A. Zoo Lights program, where Zoo guests are invited to enter the Zoo after dark and browse exhibits and special light shows. Other seasonal events hosted at the Zoo include Big Bunny’s Spring Fling, Boo at the L.A. Zoo, Photo Day, Reindeer Romp. The Zoo also provides 21-and-over events such as Sustainable Wine + Dinner Series, Brew at the L.A. Zoo, and Roaring Nights. The Zoo occasionally hosts private events such as birthday parties or corporate events.
Table 3.14-2.  Seasonal Special Events at the Zoo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Event</th>
<th>Time of Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daytime Events</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo Camp</td>
<td>January and Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Bunny's Spring Fling</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boo at the L.A. Zoo</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Day</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reindeer Romp</td>
<td>November – January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evening Events</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoopendous Nights</td>
<td>January - May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Wine + Dinner Series</td>
<td>March – September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brew at the L.A. Zoo</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roaring Nights</td>
<td>June – September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creature Camp Out</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.A. Zoo Lights</td>
<td>November – January</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.14.2  Impact Assessment Methodology

**Significance Thresholds**

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would have a significant impact related to recreational resources if:

a. The project would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or

b. The project would include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

In addition to the thresholds identified in Appendix G of the State and CEQA Guidelines, the 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide states that determination of significance shall be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the following factors:

- The net population increase resulting from the proposed project;
- The demand for recreation and park services anticipated at the time of project buildout compared to the expected level of service available. Consider, as applicable, scheduled improvements to recreation and park services (renovation, expansion, or addition) and the project’s proportional contribution to the demand; and
- Whether the project includes features that would reduce the demand for recreation and park services (e.g., on-site recreation facilities, land dedication or direct financial support to RAP).
**Methodology**

This section evaluates the adequacy of existing parks and recreational facilities to continue to serve existing and future residents and visitors of the City, including whether the Zoo itself can accommodate the projected growth in annual visitation of approximately 1.2 million. The analysis identifies Project-related effects on the accessibility of surrounding recreational facilities, increases in demand for such services, the adequacy of existing and planned facilities to meet additional demand potentially generated indirectly as a result of increases in Zoo visitation, and environmental effects of proposed Zoo recreational improvements. Finally, this section reviews whether Project increases in demand for recreational facilities would create a need for new or physically altered facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts.

**3.14.3 Environmental Impacts Analysis**

| REC-1: Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? |

**Zoo Capacity**

The Zoo provides a unique recreational amenity within the City and the Los Angeles region and is a major attraction within Griffith Park, the City’s largest and most versatile recreational facility. The Project would increase the annual visitation and use of the Zoo incrementally over 20 years. Specifically, the proposed Vision Plan projects that by the time of its Project completion in 2040, annual visitation to the Zoo would increase to 3,000,000 guests. However, the proposed Project would simultaneously increase Zoo visitation and increase visitor-serving spaces within the Project area, as approximately 24 acres of existing undeveloped area within the Zoo would be developed overtime into exhibit and visitor-serving spaces, thereby increasing the physical capacity of the existing Zoo site to accommodate more guests. Development would add up to 73,800 sf of new visitor center space, including three new visitor centers, and up to 22,400 sf of new food service facilities. The Project would also increase the Zoo’s capacity to host and accommodate existing and new special events, including after-hours events. These changes would accommodate and facilitate the growth in demand for the Zoo’s amenities and provide additional unique recreational opportunities within the City. As such, the proposed Vision Plan would effectively...
accommodate this increase in visitation through its proposed expansion of visitor-serving spaces and amenities, as well as guest programs and services.

**Loss of Recreational Lands**

With the exception of the proposed parking and vehicle entry improvements, expansions, and improvements to Zoo facilities under the Vision Plan would be contained within existing Zoo boundaries. Thus, the Project would result in no net loss of recreational lands and would not cause direct impacts to recreational facilities within Griffith Park or elsewhere.

**Accessibility to Recreational Resources**

The Zoo parking lot is shared by visitors of the Zoo and the Autry Museum, but is also used by Griffith Park visitors. Park visitors, particularly joggers and trail users, take advantage of the free parking provided outside of the Zoo. An additional 1,850 parking spaces would be added over the life of the Project. Based on the growth in capacity, the parking demand model indicates that, in Phases 1 through 6, demand will exceed capacity on days when attendance is 12,600 or higher, and that, after construction of the parking structure in Phase 7, demand will exceed capacity when attendance is 19,200 or higher. Using the parking demand model, Zoo parking demand is expected to exceed supply for at least a portion of one hour on 15 days in 2025, 25 days in 2027, 51 days in 2030, and 5 days in 2040 (Appendix N). However, accessibility to the park and supported recreational facilities would still be provided through street parking and other parking facilities within Griffith Park, the nearest of which is located at Pecan Grove Picnic area. Therefore, the proposed Project would not adversely affect accessibility to recreational resources within Griffith Park.

As analyzed in Section 3.15, Transportation, the Project would upgrade the Zoo Drive/Western Heritage Way intersection with a new signal in Phase 1. The Vision Plan also contemplates long-term improvements to this intersection to address vehicular congestion, including a roundabout or grade-separation of the intersection in Phase 7 which could potentially increase vehicle speeds and subsequently affect pedestrian safety. Further, installation of these improvements could affect the configuration and alignment of the Main Trail, which currently crosses below Zoo Drive east of its intersection with Western Heritage Way. As such, implementation of these improvements included in the proposed Project has the potential to affect the mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians along the Main Trail and could affect their safety. **MM REC-1** would require Zoo Drive/Western Heritage
Way intersection improvements be considerate of pedestrian, bicyclist, and equestrian safety with regard to the Main Trail and that use of this important trail is not hindered by implementation of the improvement. With implementation of MM REC-1, impacts to mobility and safety along the Main Trail from the proposed Project would be less than significant with mitigation.

**Recreational Resources within Griffith Park**

As is currently the case, Zoo visitors may also visit other Griffith Park amenities, such as Shane’s Inspiration playground or the Old Zoo picnic areas. However, the physical degradation of other existing recreational facilities within Griffith Park is not anticipated to occur or be accelerated by additional Zoo visitation. As previously described, the LACDP 2015 needs assessment calculated that Griffith Park experiences low park pressure within its community of North Hollywood and currently provides 6.91 acres of regional parkland per 1,000 people in a 25-mile radius. Demand for park and playground facilities by Zoo visitors would also be met by the Nature Play Park planning area, a proposed nature-based interactive playground for children and families, and a proposed 2-acre public park along Zoo Drive in the northern parking lot.

The existing children’s playground within the Zoo, named the Papiano Play Park, is frequently visited by Zoo members and their families, whose membership status grants free admission to the Zoo. As such, members regularly enter the Zoo for the primary purpose of visiting the children’s playground. The proposed Project would rename the playground as Nature Play Park, increase the playground size threefold to 18,300 square feet of a natural play area equipped with play structures and water features, and relocate the park nearby the main entrance. Comfortable seating would be provided and restrooms, and food and beverage concessions stands would be located nearby. As such, these improvements would allow for quick and easy access to the playground and fulfill some of the existing recreational needs for Zoo members.

The proposed public park would be located adjacent to the proposed parking structure in the northern parking lot (refer to Figure 2-5) and would be open to the public in addition to Zoo guests. These facilities would likely limit guest spillover into existing parks by providing the most commonly desired park services (e.g. Play area for kids, shady natural setting, and benches).

**Growth Impacts on Recreation**

The Project is not expected to facilitate indirect population or economic growth within the City or greater region that would place demand on recreation and park services compared to the existing level of service available. The proposed Project would involve the expansion of exhibits and service facilities within the Zoo grounds and is expected to result in approximately 438 new employees by completion. The majority of these jobs associated with the Project are anticipated to be supplied by the existing local or regional labor force within the City, surrounding cities, and surrounding Los Angeles region. Therefore, any net
population increase spurred by the proposed Project is anticipated to be nominal. New businesses may be attracted to the Project vicinity to support the Zoo’s projected growth in attendance, but because the Project site is currently developed with the existing Zoo, is located in a designated open space area, and the urban area surrounding Griffith Park is already densely developed, there is limited space for additional commercial development and would not cause substantial expansion of commercial districts or additional economic growth in the local community and regional area. Further, given the Project is anticipated to result in only a nominal or no increase in population and given the surrounding communities experience low park pressure, no additional demand on existing recreational facilities or for new recreational amenities is anticipated as a result of Project implementation. Therefore, Project related impacts would be less than significant.

REC-2: Would the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

Currently, the Zoo serves as a unique recreational resource and attraction within the City that serves approximately 1.8 million residents and visitors of the City each year. Under the proposed Project, redevelopment and expansion of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities within the Zoo would improve the recreational value and opportunities provided by the Zoo. As proposed, this includes development of new overnight special event spaces, picnic spots, rock climbing, playgrounds (i.e., Nature Play Park), and a public park to be located within the Zoo’s northern parking adjacent Zoo Drive. This public park would be separate from the Zoo and accessible at no cost to the public.

As described in previous sections, implementation of the proposed Project and the construction of these improvements would result in impacts to the environment. These impacts are discussed in further detail in within each resource analysis presented in Section 3, Environmental Impact Analysis. For instance, implementation of the Project has potential to adversely affect air quality, biological resources, cultural and tribal resources, energy, the City’s urban forest, geology and soils, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services, utilities, and wildfire. Please refer to those relevant sections for detailed analysis of potential impacts associated with Project implementation. In addition, a detailed analysis of consistency with existing policies and regulations governing or guiding recreational facilities and opportunities within the City is presented in Section 3.11, Land Use and Planning. Where potentially significant impacts are identified as they relate to the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, applicable existing regulations or appropriate mitigation is identified which would reduce associated Project impacts. For instance, the Project would expand into areas of the Zoo that are home to sensitive plant and wildlife species and protected trees that contribute to the City’s urban canopy. Impacts to these resources would be reduced through implementation of MM BIO-1 and MM BIO-2, which would require preparation and
implementation of a Biological Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Program and Construction Mitigation Plan, respectively. These plans would include biological resources surveys and requirements for preservation and restoration. Additionally, MM UF-1 would require a Protected Tree Plan to identify measures for the protection, relocation, and/or replacement of protected and important significant trees and shrubs, and MM UF-2 would require a Restoration Plan to ensure landscaping under the Vision Plan is planned to provide urban forest value. Development of the proposed multi-story parking structure in the northern parking lot would not be consistent with the visual character of the Zoo Drive gateway and existing Zoo entrance. However, MM VIS-1 would ensure that improvements to the main Zoo entrance, Zoo parking lots, and road/intersection improvements are design to respect and enhance the visual quality and natural character of Griffith Park (refer to Section 3.1, Aesthetics and Visual Resources). In addition, wildfire risks associated with construction and operation of the proposed Project would be reduced such that associated risk would be nominal, with implementation of MM WF-1, which would require preparation of a Wildfire Fuel Management Plan (WFMP), and MM WF-2, which would require preparation of an Evacuation and Fire Response Access Plan (EFRAP) prior to initiation of each phase of Project implementation. With implementation of the regulations and measures identified in those other sections of this EIR, impacts from the construction or expansion of recreational facilities would be less than significant.

3.14.4 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures required to reduce potentially significant environmental impacts from the construction of the proposed Project, including a new public park, are further discussed within each of the resource sections analyzed in this EIR. All mitigation measures discussed in this EIR shall apply.

MM REC-1 Consideration of the Main Trail in Intersection Designs

Should the Zoo pursue improvements to the intersection of Zoo Drive/Western Heritage Way to include a roundabout or grade-separated intersection, the design of the proposed improvements shall be considerate of pedestrian, bicyclist, and equestrian mobility and safety along the Main Trail and ensure that the use of this trail is not hindered. All proposed intersection improvements, including those for design for the mobility and safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians shall be incorporated into final plans and reviewed and approved by the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering and the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation prior to the issuance of permits for these improvements.

3.14.5 Impacts Summary

There would be no unavoidable adverse impacts on park and recreation facilities associated with the proposed Project. The Project would expand visitation to the Zoo with some potential limited increased visitation to Griffith Park and surrounding communities. This increased
demand would be addressed with expanded amenities and services within the Zoo and a new public park on site and no significant impacts would occur from development of recreation resources with mitigation required for CEQA resources in the EIR. Therefore, recreation impacts would be less than significant.