

APPROVED

Dec 19 2021

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

BOARD REPORT

NO. 24-276

DATE December 19, 2024

C.D. #

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: RUNYON CANYON PARK – APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF BIOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION SIGN IMPROVEMENTS AS A DONATION FROM THE FRIENDS OF RUNYON CANYON FOUNDATION AND THE LOS ANGELES PARKS FOUNDATION TO BE INSTALLED THROUGHOUT RUNYON CANYON PARK – CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 19, SECTION 15311(a) [INSTALLATION OF ON PREMISE SIGNS] OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES AND ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 11(1) OF CITY CEQA GUIDELINES

B. Aguirre	<u>BA</u>	M. Rudnick	_____
B. Jones	_____	* C. Santo Domingo	_____
B. Jackson	_____	N. Williams	_____

General Manager

Approved X

Disapproved _____

Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve the proposed park improvement project (Project) at various locations in Runyon Canyon Park, consisting of the installation of four educational signs regarding the biological and ecological resources of Runyon Canyon Park as more fully described in this Report, to be installed throughout Runyon Canyon Park at the locations specified in Attachment 4 of this Report (Improvements);
2. Authorize the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) Planning, Maintenance, and Construction Branch (PMC), upon the Project's approval from the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners (Board), to issue a Right of Entry Permit (ROE) authorizing installation of the Improvements to the Los Angeles Parks Foundation and their selected contractors and/or vendors;
3. Accept the Improvements valued up to approximately \$26,000, subject to a post-completion inspection of the installed Improvements by PMC staff, as a donation to RAP from The Friends of Runyon Canyon Foundation and the Los Angeles Parks Foundation;
4. Determine that the Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article 19, Section 15311(a) [Installation of on premise signs] of California CEQA Guidelines and Article III, Section 1, Class 11(1) of City CEQA Guidelines, and direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the

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Los Angeles County Clerk and the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation;

5. Authorize RAP's Chief Accounting Employee to prepare a check to the Los Angeles County Clerk in the amount of \$75.00 for the purpose of filing the NOE; and
6. Authorize RAP staff to make technical corrections as necessary to carry out the intent of this Report.

SUMMARY

Runyon Canyon Park is known to many tourists and locals alike as a welcoming open space and rigorous hiking opportunity. Beyond the iconic scenic vistas in Runyon Canyon Park lies diverse flora and fauna that most park visitors are not aware of. The proposed educational signs are recommended to provide visitors with valuable information about the Park's natural and cultural heritage, native species, geology and cultural significance as well as the importance of protecting this natural habitat. The installation of interpretive signs is essential to enhance the visitor experience, foster a deeper understanding of the Park's ecological significance, and promote responsible behavior. The signs are designed to encourage youth engagement in the Park through education about the surrounding natural resources.

To promote education on natural resources, the Los Angeles Parks Foundation has received a generous donation from The Friends of Runyon Canyon Foundation consisting of four educational signs for placement on pedestals to be installed throughout Runyon Canyon Park. Renderings of the signs and the pedestals are included herein as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively; a map identifying the proposed locations for the signs is included herein as Attachment 5. The signs and the pedestals have the following characteristics:

- 24 H X 36 W x1/3 thick exterior panel single sided
- Matte finish
- Double cantilever pedestal mount

The narrative for these signs was provided by RAP Urban Ecologist, Courtney McCammon, and RAP Junior Urban Ecologist, Ryan Kinzel.

The Project was shared with The Friends of Runyon Canyon Foundation Board to provide community engagement; the Foundation's leadership submitted a letter of support for the Project, which is attached hereto as Attachment 3. Council District 4 also submitted a letter of support for the proposed Project, which is attached hereto as Attachment 4.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed Project consists of the installation of informative signs in an existing park.

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According to the parcel profile report retrieved on November 25, 2024 this area resides in a liquefaction zone and in an Alquist Priolo Fault Zone. The installation of these signs will not create conditions that could lead to liquefaction, nor will worsen any seismic risk. This site is not within an ecologically significant, a coastal, methane, or historic zone. Therefore, there is no reasonable possibility that the proposed Project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern or have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances. No other known projects would involve cumulatively significant impacts, and no future projects would result from the proposed Project. As of November 25, 2024, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) (Envirostor at www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) (Geotracker at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) have not listed the Project site or any contaminated sites near the Project area (within 1,000 feet). According to the Caltrans Scenic Highway Map, there is no scenic highway located within – or adjacent to – the Project site. Furthermore, the proposed Project is not located in proximity of a known historical resources and will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of any historical resource.

Based in this information, staff recommends that the Board determine that the Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article 19, Section 15311(a) of California CEQA Guidelines as well as Article III, Section 1, Class 11(1) of City CEQA Guidelines. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation upon Board's approval.

TREES AND SHADE

The proposed Project has no impact on the existing shade and trees at Runyon Canyon.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The installation of the improvements will not have any fiscal impact on RAP's General Fund, as costs for the installation of the Improvements will be funded entirely by LAPF. RAP's Maintenance Department will be responsible for graffiti removal.

This Report was prepared by Stefanie Smith, Superintendent, Griffith Region.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS

1. Rendering of Signage
2. Rendering of Pedestal Frame (standard for all education signage in Runyon Canyon Park)
3. Letter of Support from Friends of Runyon Canyon Foundation
4. Letter of Support from Nithya Raman, City Councilmember
5. Site Map



Habitat Connectivity

At 160-acres, Runyon Canyon Park is an important open space in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains for park patrons, plants, and animals alike.



Desert Cottontail
Sylvilagus audubonii

Open spaces like Runyon Canyon play an important role in maintaining connectivity for wildlife populations in the increasingly impacted Santa Monica Mountains. By preserving natural corridors, we ensure that animals can move between habitats, lessening the effects of habitat loss and promoting genetic diversity.

Urban open spaces serve as important habitats for wildlife, providing food and shelter in an otherwise developed landscape. From coyotes and deer to numerous bird species, Runyon Canyon Park and its neighboring areas support a wide array of biodiversity.

Protecting these ecosystems not only benefits wildlife but also enhances our own quality of life. Green spaces help regulate climate, purify air and water, and provide people with recreational opportunities. Take action by respecting and advocating for wildlife-friendly spaces across Los Angeles!



Bobcat
Lynx rufus

Western Fence Lizard
Sceloporus occidentalis

Mule Deer
Odocoileus hemionus

Mountain Lion
Puma concolor

Coyote
Canis latrans



The Varied Habitats of Runyon Canyon Park

At 160-acres, Runyon Canyon Park is an important open space in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains for park patrons, plants, and animals alike.



Red-tailed hawk
Buteo jamaicensis

Chaparral

This habitat type is very common throughout Runyon Canyon Park and is the dominant habitat community. Often, chaparral is characterized by large, tall shrubs such as toyon, laurel sumac, mountain mahogany, and scattered coast live oaks. Often, you will see this habitat type on the shadier, north-facing slopes within the Park such as the area between West Trail and Runyon Canyon Road. This habitat provides great cover for wildlife such as ground dwelling birds, small mammals, and snakes, while also serving as a buffer from the surrounding residential areas.

Toyon
Heteromeles arbutifolia

Showy penstemon
Penstemon spectabilis

Big Pod Ceanothus
Ceanothus megacarpis

Southern honeysuckle
Lonicera subspicata

Western gray squirrel
Sciurus griseus

Southern California Black Walnut
Juglans californica

Sage scrub

This habitat type is less common and much more threatened than chaparral habitats. Sage scrub habitats are often found along the sunnier southern-facing slopes of Runyon Canyon Park such as the beginning of West Trail near the Vista entrance. Protecting this habitat from human disturbance, habitat loss, and wildfires is of vital importance. Sage scrub habitat supports an array of insects and reptiles, including some rare species. It is characterized by short shrubs with patches of native (or non-native) grasses. Some common plant species found in this habitat include black sage, California buckwheat, California sagebrush, and bush sunflower.

California Poppy
Eschscholzia californica

Coastal prickly pear
Opuntia littoralis

Western fence lizard
Sceloporus occidentalis

Protected Tree in Runyon Canyon Park

Southern California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*): Did you know that this tree is **endemic** to California? It can be found most commonly on north-facing slopes in several mountain ranges including the Santa Monica Mountains which Runyon Canyon Park is a part of. This tree species provides habitat for various bird species and small mammals eat the nuts. The Southern California black walnut is highly threatened especially in the Santa Monica Mountains due to over-development. Keep an eye out for this remarkable tree species while hiking the trails in Runyon Canyon Park!

endemic - meaning it is found in only one location on the planet, nowhere else



Los Angeles Parks
Foundation

Birds of Runyon Canyon Park

At 160-acres, Runyon Canyon Park is an important open space in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains for park patrons, plants, and animals alike.



Sign No. ##

What birds in Runyon Canyon Park indicate a healthy ecosystem?

The following birds are also known as indicator species which means that when they are present, absent, or abundant is used as an indicator of ecosystem health.

California quail

This bird is usually heard but not seen, they hide under brush and large shrubs to hide from predators and to forage for food. They have a distinct “chi-ca-go” call that is characteristic of this species. The males have strong markings compared to the females that are usually brownish-gray on the neck and face. Males also have a comma-shaped crest on the head that is not as large or distinctive on females. Listen for the males and females call back and forth to each other while you are walking in the park, you might just get lucky enough to see them!



Red-tailed hawk

A year-round resident of the Los Angeles area, Red-tailed hawks are a top predator of the sky and humans are actually their biggest threat. You can find them flying with the thermal air currents all throughout Runyon Canyon Park. They often make their nests in the largest and tallest trees within their territory. They maintain their territory year-round with their life-long partner. Look for them catching some of their favorite prey - small mammals, snakes, and sometimes large birds.



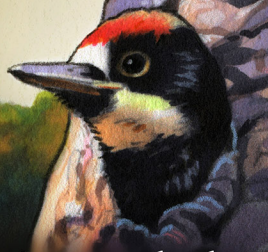
Spotted towhee

This species is a more common chaparral bird found in Runyon Canyon Park. You will often see them low in bushes or on the ground either foraging or nesting. Often, you can hear Spotted towhees noisily rustling around in the leaves underneath large shrubs or brush. A Spotted towhees diet often consists of various insects and berries. While usually inconspicuous, they still are preyed on because they nest on the ground and in low bushes. Mammals such as raccoons will find their nest and predate the eggs and larger birds such as Red-tailed hawks can attack an adult bird and predate it. They are colorful birds with, you guessed it, spots! The males have a black head while the females are generally dark brown or gray.



Acorn woodpecker

Do you see a bird with a clown-face? That's an acorn woodpecker! These fascinating birds engage in **colony nesting** meaning that there is a dense concentration of individuals during breeding season. They have a breeding group that consists of a pair (a male and female) along with several other individuals that defend the territory and communal food stores. Acorn woodpeckers are cavity nesters and often choose a cavity in a tree (sometimes a dead tree) or a utility pole, which can also be used to store acorns in.



Inspiration Point



At 160-acres, Runyon Canyon Park is an important open space in the eastern Santa Monica Mountains for park patrons, plants, and animals alike. You are in an urban wilderness. For your safety and to protect the habitat, please stay on designated trails.



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Sign No. ##

Donated by Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust

Cantilever Pedestal - Bracketed

In-Ground Mount and Surface Mount All Aluminum Construction

> Standard Posts 3" x 3"

In-Ground Mount: 54" long

Surface Mount: 32" long

Custom post sizes available:

✓ 2" x 3" ✓ 2" x 6" ✓ 4" x 4"

✓ 2" x 4" ✓ 3" x 5"

* Custom post lengths available

* Standard and custom color options available

> Standard panel height 24"

> Panel will be flush with top of the posts

> Panel attaches to welded mount angles

Length of mount angle and post arm varies by panel height.

* Post length is determined by panel height, installation height and burial depth



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Friends of Runyon Canyon Foundation
7119 W. Sunset Blvd., #336, Los Angeles, CA 90046

August 26, 2024

Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Department
Office of Board of Commissioners
P.O. Box 86328
Los Angeles, CA 90086-0328
RAP.COMMISSIONERS@LACITY.ORG

Dear Board Commissioners:

On behalf of the Friends of Runyon Canyon Foundation (FOR), we strongly support the Educational Signage proposed for Runyon Canyon Park by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

We have been meeting with the Recreation & Parks representatives, in particular RAP's urban ecologist, Courtney McCammon over the past several months to help generate signage that will be informative for the nearly two million visitors to Runyon Canyon each year. We are very pleased with her efforts, and it is our hope that these signs will not only help educate park visitors but also create a better appreciation for this valuable environmental resource in the middle of our urban city. As a result, the FOR Board has voted to fund the signage, and we look forward to their installation.

We hope that you have the opportunity to visit Runyon Canyon and thank you for your support.

Very truly yours,

Don Andres

Donald Andres
President

Cc: Councilmember Nithya Raman
RAP – Jimmy Kim, Matt Rudnick, Stefanie Smith, Tracy James
FOR Board



**NITHYA
RAMAN**

| Los Angeles
★ City Councilmember
| 4th District

September 6, 2024

Board of Commissioners
Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks
221 N Figueroa Street Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90012
United States

Dear Board of Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the installation of new educational and interpretive signage throughout Runyon Canyon Park. This initiative is not only timely but aligns perfectly with the values of conservation, preservation, and community education held by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Runyon Canyon Park as a public space, a milestone that offers us a special opportunity to reflect on the park's significance for both the local community and the countless visitors from around the world who experience its beauty every day. Runyon Canyon is not only a treasured recreational resource but also an important natural habitat in the heart of Los Angeles. The introduction of new signage will help elevate this park as a space for learning as well as leisure.

The proposed signage will educate park goers on the incredible biodiversity that thrives within the canyon. With information on local flora and fauna, these signs will deepen the appreciation of our natural environment and highlight the vital role Runyon Canyon plays in sustaining local ecosystems.

The signage will also emphasize the importance of conservation and preservation. Runyon Canyon, like all our open spaces, faces challenges from the impacts of climate change, drought, and the pressures of urbanization. By educating visitors about these challenges and how to be responsible stewards of the land, we can ensure that this park remains vibrant for future generations.

Runyon Canyon is a place of immense natural beauty, and it is our collective responsibility to protect and preserve it. This educational signage initiative will not only enhance the experience of every visitor but will also instill a greater sense of pride and responsibility in the community.

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Runyon Canyon as a public park, I believe this project will honor the past while looking forward to the future — helping to ensure that this special place remains a sanctuary for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nithya Raman".

Nithya Raman
City Councilmember, Fourth Council District

Runyon Canyon Interpretive Signage
Proposed Signage Locations

Legend

- Feature 2
- Jacopo's Bench
- Park
- Runyon Canyon Rd



Habitat Connectivity

Jacopo's Bench

Trebek Open Space

Runyon Canyon Park

Cactus Canyon Trail

Park

Birds of Runyon Canyon

OUTPOST ESTATES

Hollywood Bowl

History & Panorama

Habitats of Runyon Canyon

Runyon Canyon Rd

Wattles Garden Park

HOLLYWOOD HEIGHTS

HOLLYWOOD HIL

