

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



GOVERNING BOARD

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SIRR

GREATER CYPRESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

1150 CYPRESS AVE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90065

E-mail: GCPNC@empowerla.org
Website: cypressparknc.com

GREATER CYPRESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 – 7:00 P.M.
Online/Telephonic Meeting via Zoom # 868 4239 6909



DRAFT MINUTES

Board Members	Roll Call
Romana Barajas	Present at 7:06 p.m.
Clint Birdsong	Present
Mack Hill	Present
Ash Kramer	Present
Bryan Kramer	Present
Javier Lopez	Absent
Lizette Montes	Absent
Teresa Roman	Present
Rebecca Trotzky-Sirr	Present at 8:02 p.m.

1. Call to Order

- 1.1. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Greater Cypress Park Neighborhood Council (GCPNC) Chair, Clint Birdsong. The minutes taker, Mr. Starr, called the roll. Five (5) board members were present at roll call: Mr. Birdsong, Mack Hill, Ash Kramer (Treasurer), Bryan Kramer, and Teresa Roman. Quorum (5) was met. Romana Barajas (Vice-Chair) and Rebecca Trotzky-Sirr joined the meeting later. Javier Lopez and Lizette Montes were absent. Simultaneous Spanish-English interpretation was provided by Sthefanie Garcia and by Julia. Supporting documents were available at <https://cypressparknc.com/january22/>.

Ms. Barajas joined the meeting at 7:06 p.m. There were now 6 members present.

- 1.2. Mr. Birdsong provided instructions on making public comment and accessing interpretation features. He acknowledged that Cypress Park sits on land formerly inhabited by the Tongva people. He reminded board members of the Code of Conduct.

2. Comments from Public Officials

- 2.1. **Ricardo Flores** (ricardo.x.flores@lacity.org), Senior Field Deputy for Councilmember Cedillo (CD1) reported. A community meeting on crime would be rescheduled due to a spike in COVID cases. He encouraged the board to participated in an upcoming meeting regarding the beautification project for Avenue 27 and Idell St. He would send possible dates to the board. A maintenance contract was in place for the roundabout on San Fernando Rd. and they were trying to figure out how to repair the

“eggheads” that were damaged, vandalized and/or broken. The contract would initially be through CD1 for the first couple of months and would then be replaced with a long-term contract. The goal was to have the roundabout cleaned twice each month. He would share dates two planned cleanups and produce distributions in Cypress Park.

Ms. Kramer referred to trash buildup and illegal dumping on Cypress Ave. by Division and requested “no dumping” signs. Flores said he would have additional signs installed on Cypress.

Board members also suggested placing signs by the Home Depot store and on Amabel and Figueroa.

Mr. Hill asked about planned repaving, reconfiguring, and restriping and restriping of CD1 area roads and how community needs and concerns could be shared with CS1. Flores said Cypress Ave. had just been resurfaced and that curbs painted red were repainted, but no red curbs were newly designated as red. Mr. Hill noted that curbs next to Harbor Freight, where RVs were known to park, had been newly painted red.

In the new fiscal year starting in July, Flores said there would be an updated list of streets to be resurfaced. Flores invited the community to contact him regarding streets that needed to be surveyed, and he would also look into any reports of red curbs that had not been red previously. He said property owners would occasionally illegally paint curbs red or gray.

Various traffic mitigations for Cypress Park were proposed and discussed. Flores agreed to ask LADOT about diagonal parking on Cypress Ave. from Pepper to Division, where it was wider.

Ms. Roman advocated for better light for pedestrian visibility at Merced St. and Cypress Ave., where speeding was common. She said Cypress Park needed more trees and shade, and said existing trees were poorly maintained. Flores agreed to discuss spot enforcement with LAPD and added that tree cycles were 5 to 10 years and that trees along Cypress Ave. from Idell to Pepper had been trimmed a couple years prior. He invited Roman to let him know which trees had not been trimmed properly.

Mr. Birdsong suggested that if speed humps had been installed on Riverside Drive, then they should be allowable on Cypress Ave., despite the fact LADOT said streets categorized as highways or avenues did not qualify. Flores said he would look into the proposal as part of his ongoing work for Cypress Ave. He added that he preferred a “hawks” — pedestrian activated signals — to crosswalks because they offered more safety.

Ms. Barajas said they had requested a crosswalk or a signal on Cypress between Roseview and Division St., where a popular bus stop was located, for years. Flores said he would ask LADOT to see what traffic mitigations could be implemented on Cypress between Pepper and Division.

Birdsong said there was frequent enforcement on Cypress Ave. but it didn’t seem to help, and crosswalks across five lanes of traffic were not safe. Flores said diagonal parking might reduce parking spaces, but he would ask LADOT to look into it.

Ms. Kramer requested that no mitigations be made that would remove any bike lanes.

Birdsong requested that no speed study be taken up as it might result in a higher speed limit according to State laws.

Mr. Birdsong noted that the discussion had “moved to Item 8.5” about 8 minutes prior.

Ms. Roman said crosswalks and a sidewalk were needed on Asbury and Future Streets because of speeding and many accidents.

Flores said he would request “an overall study” between Pepper and Division and would provide an update in February.

- 2.2. Octaviano Rios** (octaviano.rios@lacity.org), Empowerment Advocate, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), reported on upcoming Core Institute trainings and recordings of past sessions. ABLE training was due on January 1st, 2022. DONE had made a comprehensive report on the 2021 NC elections. He agreed to find out about an “open case” referred to in the Monthly Profile.

At this time (7:53) Item 8.2 was taken up.

3. Public Comments

This item was taken up at 8:33 after Item 8.2.

- 3.1. Ms. Barajas commented that the City had provided \$3 million in matching funds for the Rio de Los Angeles Park, bringing the total to \$7 million to \$7.5 million targeted to repair the playing fields and other elements. Stakeholders were reaching out to her claiming the park and its fields were “falling apart,” that the area was being fenced off, bathrooms were not being tended; and there were safety concerns and no security was being provided. She asked to invite a representative to a meeting to explain how the money was being used. Mr. Birdsong said he would follow up with Ms. Barajas regarding the request.

At this time (8:35 p.m.), Item 8.1 was taken up.

4. Chair and Vice Chair Report

- 4.1. Update on member eligibility to vote.

This item was not discussed.

5. Land Use and Housing/Homelessness Committee Action Items

- 5.1. Discussion and Possible Action: Consideration of Applications to fill vacant Land Use and Housing committee seat

Ms. Kramer moved to appoint Lance Barresi to the Land Use and Housing/Homelessness Committee. **Mr. Birdsong** seconded and noted the vacancy had been well publicized. Ms. Kramer said the applicant owned a business in the community. **There was no public comment.**

The motion passed with all seven present voting in favor. Two were absent (Lopez, Montes).

Mr. Barresi introduced himself.

- 5.2. Discussion and Possible Action: Letter to CD1 regarding Cypress Ave safety Draft letter here: <https://bit.ly/3HIK3HN>

This item was postponed to the next meeting without objection.

- 5.3. Discussion and Possible Action: Reminder to please make LA- 311 requests for sidewalks repair on Cypress Ave

Ms. Kramer encouraged attendees to complete MyLA311 requests regarding [broken] sidewalks on Cypress Ave. to “get data into the City’s data flow.”

At this time (9:49 p.m.), Item 7 was taken up.

6. Treasurer’s Report

- 6.1. Approval of the December 2021 Monthly Expenditure Report

This item was taken up at 9:38 p.m. after Item 8.4.

Ms. Kramer moved to approve the December 2021 MER. **Mr. Birdsong** seconded. There was no public comment. The motion passed with all seven (7) voting in favor. Two were absent (Lopez, Montes).

At this time, (9:40 p.m.), Item 5.1 was taken up.

- 6.2. Approval of Annual Inventory Report

This was not taken up.

7. Consent Calendar

- Approve November and December Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Kramer moved to approve the Consent Calendar. **Ms. Barajas** seconded. The motion passed with all 7 members present voting in favor. Two were absent (Lopez, Montes).

Mr. Birdsong announced that Lizette Montes had written to him that she was no longer able to participate; however, she had not specifically resigned. He had followed up for a statement of resignation and he encouraged board members to help identify interested stakeholders for the vacant seat.

At this time (9:57 p.m.), Item 11 was taken up.

8. Action Items

- 8.1. Discussion and Possible Action: Presentation from Danielle Stevenson from University of California Riverside on her test of a cleanup method for a small part of Taylor Yard's G2 parcel launching this winter, using native plants and fungi to clean the soil

This item was taken up after Item 3 at 8:35 p.m.

Danielle Stevenson said she was a PhD Candidate in environmental toxicology at UC Riverside and was partnering with the 100 Acre Partnership on a bioremediation research cleanup project at the Taylor Yard G2 Parcel. She gave a presentation on phytoremediation, working with plants to clean up toxins, and mycoremediation, working with fungi.

Plants could extract metals such as lead, while fungi could connect to roots and enhance phytoextraction. Other fungus could break down contaminants such as diesel fuel, leaving behind clean soil. Native plant metal extractors included telegraph weed and California buckwheat.

The research area was to be along the river with a targeted start date in February 2022. The team would monitor and test every few weeks to track their progress. Taylor Yard was among five brownfield sites around the city taking part in the study. At the end of the study, they would harvest all the plant material, test it, and dispose of it as HAZMAT at UCR. The project was described at <https://phyto-cyco-remediation.ucr.edu> and Ms. Stevenson could be reached at dstev013@ucr.edu.

There were volunteer opportunities and virtual tours and being planned. At the end of the study in 2023, they would publish a scientific study, policy document, fact sheet, and report.

Responding to questions, she explained they would use drip irrigation. They had developed a timeline with delivery dates and number of vehicles, and she had been briefed on the importance of the 5 to 10 mph speed limit to minimize dust. The location did not require them to drive on the access road. The study was intended to determine if bioremediation would be feasible on a larger scale.

Plants could remediate only as deep as their roots; and So Cal native plants had deep root systems; however, the study area did not have underground tanks and contaminants were believed to be in the shallow soil, within the top 4 feet. She noted it could take multiple growing seasons to complete the extraction of lead at Taylor Yard; however, organic contaminants such as diesel might be 99% broken down in three months. Stevenson believed there would be a positive impact on surrounding vegetation by providing habitat and food for pollinators and birds, etc. She noted that because of the high cost of conventional remediation, sites might sit for decades, so bioremediation could prove to be a faster path.

She agreed to return with project updates.

Ms. Roman asked if there was not sufficient funding for conventional remediation. [The interpreter was not easily understood at this time.]

Ms. Stevenson said every site was different, there could be "hotspots." Site assessments often had very few samples taken and results involved extrapolation. In contrast, Stevenson would take "a huge number of samples" — 200 plots on each study site. Each plot was 2' x 2', and within every plot, three samples at different depths would be taken to total 600 samples over the entire site.

In public comment, Juan Corral asked what they considered to be "success" and what other entities were involved in the pilot. Stevenson said Sand County Environmental based in Wisconsin was "looking at" the pilot. Success meant lowering levels of contaminants of concern such as lead, arsenic, and diesel to below the screening limits for park use.

Jessica Swan from Department of Toxic Substances Control said she was the public participation specialist. She clarified that they did not yet have a remediation plan for either parcel.

Brian Baldauf (info@100acrepartnership.org) said there wasn't a remediation plan in this place for the park; the plan from when Union Pacific was the owner was still in effect now. He said they wanted to clean up the site more and make it a "community process."

At this time (9:15 p.m.), Item 8.3 was taken up.

- 8.2.** Discussion and Possible Action: The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) recently released the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). The Authority will provide the Board a briefing on the upcoming availability of the Final EIR/EIS for the Burbank to Los Angeles Section and what we can expect in the document. They published Final EIR/EIS in November and bring it to the Authority board for consideration in January 2022 (www.metromicrotoolkit.com)

This item was taken up at 7:53 p.m. after Item 2.1.

Chelsea Dickerson, Diane Ricard, Tyler Bonstead, and LaDonna DiCamillo presented. They described the voter-approved 520-mile Phase 1 of the high-speed rail project, the portions that were under construction (north of Bakersfield), areas that had completed the environmental documents (from Bakersfield to Palmdale) and where environmental documents were underway (from Palmdale to Los Angeles). They were committed to 100 renewable electric power.

The team wanted to engage small businesses as part of investing in the "bookends" outside the central valley. There was a \$41 million commitment to Union Station, where Metro was the lead agent to create "run-through" tracks out of dead-end tracks. \$77 million had been invested in a grade separation for safety.

Ms. Ricard said the "preferred alternative" had no stops between Burbank Airport Station and Union Station. The planned decision date was in the first quarter of 2022.

Rebecca Trotzky-Sirr joined the meeting at 8:02 p.m. There were now seven board members present.

The rail lines were aligned with the parks. Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features (IAMF) were described as "commitments on the part of the authority that [were] enforceable."

Tyler Bonstead was the project manager for the consultant team that prepared documents for the stretch from Burbank to Los Angeles. He described the environmental documents, including comments received from Cypress Park, which he said were largely focused on environmental impacts to the LA River, which he then discussed.

IAMFs included the appointment of a construction ombudsman, who would be the single point of contact with the authority for issues that come up, and to spotlight businesses during construction area & process; the development of aesthetic treatments with community inclusion; equity noise analysis; relocation or displacement assistance; and community inclusion in the process of rerouting bike paths.

Ms. DiCamillo discussed the project process and timeline. A board meeting was the opportunity for public comment was planned for January 19-20. Comments could be submitted on the final environmental document could be submitted in writing via the website; commenters could also register to give oral testimony at www.hsr.ca.gov prior to the meeting. She listed the libraries that had been provided hard copies of the environmental document. Members of the public could "keep in touch" by calling (877) 977-1660 or emailing burbank_los.angeles@hsr.ca.gov.

Responding to board questions, the presenters explained that trains would travel at approximately 200 mph north of Burbank, and while they could travel at up to 110 mph from Burbank to Union Station, they would only travel at Metrolink's maximum for the alignment, which was 79 mph., reduced to 55 mph along the 2 Freeway and to 25 mph near Union Station. While the project was targeted to be operational in 2033, it might start early because it offered opportunities to improve the corridor for other passenger operators.

Bonstead said eminent domain was a last-resort option in the property acquisition process; however, the need for such acquisition was not great in the local area as they would add two tracks to the

existing 100-foot-wide corridor. Mr. Hill spoke to the need to honor the significance of Cypress Park's land, to the history of the river, and to the history of the community.

Ms. Barajas expressed concerns that new tracks could cut off Cypress Park's access to the park; a bridge was needed from Sotomayor to the parks were planned for the G1 and G2 parcels. She was concerned about safety for the four school complexes. A sound wall that had been discussed could restrict physical access from Cypress Park to the parks and would act as a visual barrier as well. She said the plan favored Elysian Valley but not Cypress Park or Glassell Park. Previously, there had been a plan for children to be able to cross the river safely, but that was no longer the case.

In response, Ms. DiCamillo confirmed that the 100 Acre Partnership wanted pedestrian access at the location Barajas had described; however, she could not commit to funding for an overpass, as there was no guaranteed funding following the environmental step. They proposed to work with the 100 Acre Partnership and to use internal resources to propose a crossing. They were investigating a design variance and hoped to leave the "status quo" and to use "internal planning grant writing opportunities" to help reach those goals.

Bonstead said the proposed sound wall would be on the west side of the Metrolink maintenance facility, not next to the park, from the I-5 crossing at the south to Taylor Yard just south of the Rio de Los Angeles State Park at the north end. No other sound wall was proposed due to no expected sound impacts. The only thing proposed for Sotomayor was temporary access to the build the retaining wall and ongoing access to ensure it remained in good condition. Bonstead believed access was planned from the FedEx site.

In public comment, Juan Corral said the original plans had the access road behind the FedEx site from San Fernando Road through Sotomayor. He inquired about extra traffic, and said Metro was had proposed adding a Metro stop in Cypress Park. Would the HSR plans have any effects on Metro's plan. Since the project passed through a brownfield site, how would they address dust abatement given the lead levels and the proximity to playgrounds. Would they install live air monitors? How would they address impacts of traffic and construction on morning and evening school drop offs?

Bonstead replied that the access road would not be through Sotomayor but instead behind it to ensure there was a retaining wall along the boundary between Sotomayor and the tracks. The project proposed two additional tracks to the two used by Metro, Amtrak, and freight trains. The new tracks would be electrified for HSR and for other passenger trains, while existing tracks would remain non-electrified. They would demolish existing tracks and shift them to create for more space. They were aware of plans for a Cypress Park train stop for Metrolink. It was unlikely the HSR would have a Cypress Park stop, but nothing in the current plan precluded adding new stops on the non-electrified tracks; but Bonstead admitted there could be some difficulty in adding a stop given the two new tracks being added to the existing corridor space. Furthermore, they had a mitigation measure to minimize dust and hazardous materials and a "pretty advanced program overall." The Authority would work to minimize pollution impacts on the community. Traffic control plans would be in place to minimize impacts to the community during construction. They would not need to access rights-of-way through Cypress Park; only to provide access for trucks to the freeway. Those details would be in a traffic control plan developed later.

Ms. Dickerson said the executive summary was in multiple languages and she offered to help provide translations for the supporting documents.

At this time (8:33 p.m.), Item 3 was taken up.

8.3. Discussion and Possible Action: 100 Acre Partnership, Taylor Yard, and any other LA River area updates

This item was taken up at 9:15 p.m. after Item 8.1,

Miguel Paredes (mparedes@leeandrewsgroup.com), Senior Outreach Specialist, Lee Andrews Group, said the G2 Parcel designs were underway. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was seeking a new consultant team to complete designs and permitting. The deadline was January 26th. The Bowtie team deadline would be determined in mid-March. The Bureau of Engineering's Integrated Feasibility

Report (IFR) would go to City Council. They were looking to hire 8 individuals for the community organizer positions from Glassell Park, Cypress Park, and/or Elysian Valley at \$20/hr. and were also seeking potential members for the community advisory committee.

Mr. Baldauf said the original consultant for TNC was "Blue Green."

8.4. Discussion and Possible Action: NPG Grant Request from El Rio de Los Angeles Veterans Collective for up to \$4000

Bob Ramirez said the grant being sought was for a May 28th Memorial Day event to recognize deceased veterans in the community and to honor their families.

Ms. Kramer said the application was available for review on the GCPNC website.

Responding to Mr. Birdsong, Ramirez described other funding sources and the overall budget. To Mr. Hill, he explained that first responder plaques with the GCPNC name would be hung at the LAPD Northeast Division Station and at LAFD Station 55. He was requesting funds for flags from other NCs.

Ms. Barajas moved to approve the \$4,000 grant request. **Mr. Birdsong** seconded. The motion passed with four in favor (Barajas, Birdsong, A. Kramer, B. Kramer) and three abstentions (Hill, Roman, Trotzky-Sirr). Two were absent (Lopez, Montes).

At this time (9:37 p.m.), Item 6.1 was taken up.

8.5. Discussion and Possible Action: Cypress Ave Repaving and Restriping Review Process Concerns

Mr. Birdsong noted that the topic had been covered during Mr. Flores' report in Section 2 (which was around 7:42 p.m.).

8.6. Discussion and Possible Action: Letter of concerns from the GCPNC for the January 15, 2022 CD1 and LAPD meeting at Cypress Park Rec. Center regarding Cypress Park crime.

This item was postponed "due to a change in plans."

9. New Business and ideas for future meetings

There was none.

10. Upcoming Meetings and Events

- Governing Board Meeting: Tuesday, February 8, 7:00PM
- Monday, February 7, 6:00PM

11. Adjournment

This item was taken up at 9:57 p.m. after Item 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m. without objection.

Respectfully submitted by Conrad Starr.