

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Julie Edmonds-Mares

**SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS HILL
GRAND STAIRCASE UPDATE**

DATE: December 16, 2014

Approved



Date

12/16/14

INFORMATION

The purpose of this informational memorandum is to provide an update on activity related to the Grand Staircase at Communications Hill, as follow up from the October 21, 2014 City Council meeting.

At the October 21, 2014 City Council meeting, the following direction was received:

1. Fund security services through the existing Community Facilities District (CFD);
2. Establish and enforce a dusk to dawn curfew;
3. Install pedestrian traffic control devices such as sally ports, gates, or bulb outs;
4. Work with elected representatives in Sacramento to pass legislation to allow for the legal transfer or conversion of the Grand Staircase to parkland or trail; and
5. Return by December 9, 2014, with a proposed ordinance recommendation to address nuisances, and other threats to public safety at the Grand Staircase.

Since the October 21, 2014 Council meeting, staff has continued to work with the homeowners association (HOA) on solutions to the issues at the staircase. In particular, the following progress has been made:

1. Steps to include security services through the existing CFD are underway. Pending a vote of the residents, this could be implemented by late 2015;
2. The Parks Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department is coordinating with intergovernmental relations staff to explore options to help address this issue. Additionally, steps to establish a dusk to dawn curfew are underway. The Grand Staircase is a pedestrian easement governed by the California Vehicle Code. Section §21101.4 of the California Vehicle Code indicates that closing the Grand Staircase would require the

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identification of serious and continual criminal activity, and a recommendation from the Police Department. The first step in this effort has been to gather police call for service data from the neighborhoods surrounding the staircase over the past three years, as well as data from the calls received by the local home owner's association. This data has been gathered and is currently being analyzed to determine if the data can justify closing the staircase at night under the Vehicle Code, or through a nuisance ordinance. Staff anticipates completing this review over the coming month and returning to council in late January with a recommendation;

3. Designs have been completed for the installation of devices on the staircase that will slow the flow of pedestrian traffic. Staff has received concurrence from the HOA board on the designs. City staff will proceed with the pilot installation of these devices. This is anticipated to occur in January 2015. Signs will be placed at the staircase to ensure that residents and users are aware of the pending installation of devices; and
4. Staff is working with the developer on the design of a new staircase on the Hillsdale Avenue side of Communications Hill, which will be implemented as a recreational amenity in order to alleviate uses on the existing staircase. Recreational user outreach will be initiated to provide feedback to staff on the desirable features that generated the usage on the existing staircase.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the Planning, Building and Code Enforcement (PBCE) and Public Works Departments.

/s/

JULIE EDMONDS-MARES
Director of Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services

For questions please contact Steve Hammack, Parks Deputy Director, at (408) 793-5579.