



Los Angeles County AUDIT COMMITTEE

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ADOPTED

November 15, 2022

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
40 November 15, 2022

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

CELIA ZAVALA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Supervisors:

SUNSET REVIEW FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY BOARD OF GOVERNORS (ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

SUBJECT:

Request to extend the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Board of Governors' sunset review to September 30, 2026.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR COMMITTEE:

1. Recommend to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board of Supervisors) to approve extending the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Board of Governors' (Board of Governors) sunset review for four years, to September 30, 2026.
2. Instruct County Counsel to introduce an ordinance to update the Los Angeles County Code 2.94.080 "Sunset Review Date" to effectuate the change.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION

At its meeting held on September 21, 2022, the Audit Committee considered and approved the recommendations of the Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors to extend the Board of Governors sunset review date to September 30, 2026.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History (NHM) Board of Governors is charged with developing and establishing NHM's policies and advising the Board of Supervisors on matters regarding governing NHM's operations, goals

To enrich lives through effective and caring service

and programming activities. Also, the Board of Governors is charged to work alongside NHM's Director in promoting NHM's public image. This is done by allowing the public to participate in field trips, internships and educational workshops or activities at the museum.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Board of Governors do not receive compensation, except when they are required to travel in performance of their duties.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Department of History, Science and Art was created by the Board of Supervisors on May 19, 1942. The Department was initially known as the Department of History, Science and Art and its purpose was to manage all matters relating to history, science, and art. In addition, the Board of Supervisors gave the Department of History, Science and Art authority to manage Hancock Park and other County properties devoted to history, science, and art.

The Board of Supervisors created the Board of Governors in May 1942 to help supervise the operational portion of the Department of History, Science and Art. On March 8, 1966, the Board of Supervisors changed the name from the Department of History, Science and Art to the Department of Museum of Natural History. In addition, the Board of Governors' term(s) of service was modified in June 1990. The initial term of service was three (3) years, and their length of service was limited to two (2) consecutive terms. Presently, the term of service has been changed to four (4) years and they serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICE (OR PROJECTS)

There are no anticipated impacts to current services and projects associated with the proposed action.

CONCLUSION

The Board of Governors ensures that the NHMLAC is open and available to the public, representing the County in the governance of the museum, such as offering museum days that are free from admission fees. The members of Board of Governors also bring in their own personal connections in representing the public's interest to the programs of the museum, as this is a different perspective compared to that of the Board of Trustee members whose connections are often geared to generous museum supporters and patrons.

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
November 15, 2022
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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kirk Shelton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "K".

Kirk Shelton
Chair, Audit Committee

KS:tpk

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Museum of Natural History Board of Governors

EXECUTIVE OFFICE



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

CELIA ZAVALA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

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HOLLY J. MITCHELL

SHEILA KUEHL

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KATHRYN BARGER

September 21, 2022

TO: Audit Committee

FROM: Celia Zavala 
Executive Officer

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO EXTEND THE SUNSET REVIEW FOR MUSEUM OF
NATURAL HISTORY, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, BOARD OF
GOVERNORS

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR COMMITTEE:

1. Recommend to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to approve extending the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Board of Governors' sunset review for four years, to September 30, 2026.
2. Instruct County Counsel to prepare an ordinance to update the Los Angeles County Code 2.94.080 "Sunset Review Date" to effectuate the change.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History (NHM) Board of Governors is charged with developing and establishing NHM's policies with collaboration of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation Board of Trustees (Foundation) and advising the Board of Supervisors on matters regarding governing NHM's operations, goals and programming activities. Also, the Board of Governors is charged to work alongside NHM's President and Director in promoting the County's only science institution, including the research and public image. This is done by allowing the public to participate in field trips, internships and educational workshops or activities at the museum sites: NHM in Exposition Park, La Brea Tar Pits & Museum (LBTP) in Hancock Park and William S. Hart Museum in Newhall.

Overall, our review noted that the Board of Governors' efforts and/or activities were generally aligned with their mission and goals. We encourage the Board of Governors to align their future goals with their ordinance, as well as with the Board of Supervisors' mandated initiatives.

We further encourage the Board of Governors to complete and submit an annual report and continue to work with NHM in expanding and/or implementing additional action plans that help promote inclusion, diversity, equity and access at NHM, LBTP and the William S. Hart Museum. Based on this review, it is recommended extending the NHM, Board of Governors' sunset review for four years, to September 30, 2026.

BACKGROUND

The Department of History, Science and Art was created by the Board of Supervisors on May 19, 1942. The Department was initially known as the Department of History, Science and Art and its purpose was to manage all matters relating to history, science, and art. In addition, the Board of Supervisors gave the Department of History, Science and Art authority to manage Hancock Park and other County properties devoted to history, science, and art.

The Board of Supervisors created the Board of Governors in May 1942, to help supervise the operational portion of the Department of History, Science and Art. On March 8, 1966, the Board of Supervisors changed the name from the Department of History, Science and Art to the Department of Museum of Natural History. In addition, the Board of Governors' term(s) of service was modified in June 1990. The initial term of service was three years, and their length of service was limited to two consecutive terms. Presently, the term of service has been changed to four years and they serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE AND/OR AUTHORITIES

The NHM has four organizations that work collaboratively to execute and champion the museums' visions, goals, protection of the fossil collections and maintenance of operational activities, including the: A) Board of Governors; B) Executive Committee of the Board of Governors; C) Executive Leadership Team; and D) NHM Foundation Board of Trustees.

A) Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has four functions: 1) To provide updates to the Board of Supervisors regarding their own future goals, as well as programming activities of both NHM and the Executive Leadership Team; 2) To promote the museum's public image and its cultural and educational activities; 3) To collaborate with NHM's Director and Executive Leadership Team in producing museum policies and reviewing the museum's daily operations; and 4) To ensure NHM's uniform governance and oversight by serving as members of Board of Governor's Executive Committee and NHM Foundation Board of Trustees. The Board of Governors is comprised of fifteen members, of which three members are appointed by each of the supervisorial district.

B) Executive Committee of the Board of Governors

The Executive Committee's role is to work alongside the Board of Governors and the Executive Leadership Team in supervising the general management of NHM. The Executive Committee is comprised of seven individuals who are selected from the Board of Governors' membership roster by the Board of Governors' President and meet as needed.

C) Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team's purpose is twofold: 1) To implement the principles of accessibility and engagement; and 2) To become a hub for discoveries and dialogue around critical issues of global significance and local importance. The Executive Leadership Team collaborates with the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors, various government agencies, private entities and/or foundations, and over 74 County and 493 Foundation employees to inspire wonder, discovery, and responsibility for the natural and cultural worlds. The Executive Leadership Team is comprised of nine executive staff members from NHM.

D) NHM Foundation Board of Trustees

The Foundation Board of Trustees' role is to oversee the daily operations, as well as provide financial support by obtaining funds annually from donors on behalf of NHM. In addition, the Foundation Board of Trustees works cohesively with the Executive Leadership Team in promoting the missions and values of NHM. The Foundation Board of Trustees also appoints most of its own members, and they include all of the Board of Governors, who can also serve as Trustee members. The Board of Trustees is comprised of 30 to 55 advocates who meet quarterly with additional quarterly subcommittee meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Board of Governors do not receive compensation, except when they are required to travel to perform their duties.

ANALYSIS

The sunset review of the Board of Governors was conducted by reviewing the attendance records, statement of proceedings, fact sheets, ordinance, and other documentations related to the Board of Governors. In addition, the Board of Governors and stakeholders were surveyed using questionnaires regarding the performance of the Board of Governors. Also, we observed the Board of Governors' annual meeting, as well as visited both the LBTP and NHM and interviewed several members of management.

RESULTS OF OUR REVIEW

Effectiveness of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is an effective and engaged governing entity. They have assisted NHM through discussing and/or approving strategic goals to better advocate, support, and further advance the mission of NHM. Also, the Board of Governors has made an impact in being members of Executive Committee and NHM Foundation Board of Trustees, and was able to leverage their expertise, experience, and influence in the non-profit/philanthropic sectors, government policy and legislation, corporate leadership, or public relations/media/marketing, to create strategic, accountable, and executable action plans to help continue the advancement of the NHM's goals and objectives. We encourage the Board of Governors to provide an annual report to keep the Board of Supervisors informed of their current and/or recent activities, on-going projects and museum recommendations.

Membership Participation

For Fiscal Years (FYs) 2017 through 2021, the Board of Governors held four (100%) annual meetings with an average attendance of 12 members per meeting. There were no cancelled meetings and there are no vacant positions at the present time.

GOAL COMPLETION

During this review period, the Board of Governors' efforts have been concentrated in approving museum policies, maintaining good relations with the Board of Supervisors, and promoting the image of the museum to the public. The following are the notable LBTP and NHM's goals/activities/projects reported and approved by the Board of Governors:

(A) Efforts Connected to Climate Change

Paleontology and Biology (Paleo-Biology) Conservation Project (On-going)

LBTP researchers are applying paleontological data and methods in novel ways to prevent species extinction, restore habitats, and sustain the benefits people obtain from ecosystems.

The La Brea Tar Pits Master Plan (On-going)

The Board of Governors reviewed the LBTP's master plan (master plan) concept, for which it redefined Hancock Park and the museum as one unified identity. The master plan proposed continuous loops that will connect the rich but disparate existing structures, enhancing amenities for community and research.

The lenses, as framed throughout the park and museum, will bring into focus the museum's collection and scientific activities at multiple scales. As flexible armatures, loops and lenses connect and reveal, they form an intimate journey of discovery and inspiration. Together, they tell a story of LBTP: The continuum from prehistoric time to our contemporary moment.

Four Design Principles of the master plan:

- Connect the Museum and Park to the cultural landscape.
- Enhance Hancock's Park's environmental identity.
- Magnify the museum's visibility.
- Reveal the museum collection.

The Center for Nature and Culture (On-going)

The Board of Governors was briefed about the new building called the NHM Commons, which is an expansion of NHM as the anchor of Exposition Park. NHM Commons seeks to create a transparent, engaging, and accessible community hub that activates the County and Foundation collections, research, exhibitions and programs. NHM Commons provides expanded programming in 75,000 square feet of replaced and renovated building spaces that will deliver on NHM's vision to inspire wonder, discovery and responsibility of our natural and cultural worlds with new vibrancy and transparency all while the vast majority of NHM remains open to visitors. The Board of Governors were encouraged to connect with their respective Supervisors to advocate for the NHM's upcoming capital projects.

(B) Efforts Connected to Environmental Justice (On-going and Based on Funding)

Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internships

Both NHM and LBTP are part of the Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internships program. The goal of the internship program is to diversify the staff of museums and visual arts organizations to better reflect the communities they serve. The primary strategy is to provide paid full-time summer internships in Los Angeles to college students from cultural backgrounds traditionally under-represented in museums and visual arts organizations and inspiring them to engage in museum careers and other cultural institutions. According to the Getty Marrow Impact Report, what started as a response to racial injustice has become the largest and longest-standing diversity internship program at the museums and visual arts in the United States.

Since the program began in 1993, approximately 175 local museums and arts institutions, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Arts (LACMA), Hammer Museum, NHM and LBTP, have hosted over 3,200 interns, providing transformational educational experiences that ignite and excite the career imaginations of participants towards career possibilities at the museums and visual arts.

(C) Efforts Connected to Cultural and Programming Activities (On-going)

Museum Attendance

The NHM’s cultural and programming activities ranged from Live Puppeteers and animals to the Butterfly Pavilion. For FYs 2017 through 2021, the Board of Governors received several debriefings regarding NHM’s and LBTP’s attendance, cultural and programming activities. The following are the breakdown NHM and LBTP’s public attendance for FYs 2017-18 through 2020-21:

NHM.....	1,818,926 attendees
LBTP.....	1,555,524 attendees
William S. Hart Museum.....	29,866 attendees
Story Time-FB Live Gallery Puppeteers.....	295,605 streamers
Lunch Time with Live Animals.....	222,407 streamers

It is worth noting that there was no in-person attendance from March 13, 2020, through September 4, 2020. However, NHM opened the Butterfly Pavilion on September 4, 2020, and only the Butterfly Pavilion and the Nature Gardens were opened during this timeframe. NHM opened its doors on April 1, 2021, from Wednesdays through Sundays. LBTP opened its doors on April 8, 2021, from Wednesdays through Sundays. Finally, on June 28, 2021, NHM and LBTP opened their doors six days a week, Wednesdays through Mondays and they are free between 3-5pm.

(D) Efforts Connected to Community Engagement (On-going)

Community Partnerships

During our review, we noted that NHM took time to engage with County residents. Specifically, NHM’s main focus was to engage, listen, implement change and support the community and they collaborated with at least 40 community agencies, (depending on funding resources) to participate on issues regarding mental health, environmental or planetary issues and what was considered important in the community. In addition, NHM collaborated with other entities (i.e., Department of Parks and Recreations (DPR), Department of Public Works (DPW), Tribal Groups and Senior Centers) to assist in creating the summer camps curriculum at NHM. DPR had 12 sites participating in this collaboration.

**(E) Efforts Connected to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA)
(On-going)**

IDEA Working Group

The Board of Governors worked alongside NHM and the Foundation in creating a sub-committee called IDEA Working Group (IWG) to implement a transformative program that promotes inclusion, diversity, equity, and access at the museum. IWG is a multi-level and cross-departmental team of NHM employees charged with developing and activating IDEA values. Each staff member diligently acted as stewards in implementing the IDEA process. Consistent with the Board of Supervisor's initiatives regarding "Inclusion, Diversity and Equity," we encourage the Board of Governors to continue their efforts in endorsing additional action plans that support the reduction of implicit bias, promote cultural competency and equity in NHM's policy, operations, goals, and programming activities.

CONCLUSION

The Board of Governors ensures that the NHM is open and available to the public, representing the County in the governance of the museum, such as offering museum days that are free from admission fees. The members of Board of Governors also bring in their own personal connections in representing the public's interest to the programs of the museum, as this is a different perspective compared to that of the NHM Foundation Board of Trustee members whose connections are often geared to generous museum supporters and patrons.

Based on our review, the Executive Officer of the Board recommends extending the Board of Governors' sunset review date to September 30, 2026.

Should you have any questions regarding this report, you may contact Mary Ann Morato or Twila P. Kerr at (213) 893-2550.

CZ:LL:tpk

c: Dr. Lori Bettison-Varga, President and Director of the Museum of
Natural History
Dawn McDivitt, Chief Deputy Director of the Museum of Natural History
Dawyn R. Harrison, Acting County Counsel