



# South Land Park

## Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 22903 Sacramento, CA 95822

February 11, 2015

Mr. Rob Turner  
Sactown Magazine

**Re: Letter to the Editor/Rebuttal to *Zoo Station* editorial**

Dear Mr. Turner:

Your editorial, *Zoo Station*, was disappointing, inaccurate, and frankly offensive to residents of South Land Park. The piece contains several serious misstatements and omissions of fact.

First, Rob Turner claims that the plan to extend tourist trains from Old Sacramento to Hood was “derailed” and “shelved” last year by “NIMBYism.” In fact, the Zoo extension was approved, and the Pocket Road to Hood train route was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Moreover, the South Land Park Neighborhood Association did not oppose the Hood or Zoo train lines. We opposed only a third “maintenance line” connecting the Zoo to Pocket Road. We proposed instead that State Parks should build a small train maintenance facility south of the city, rather than using our cherished neighborhood greenbelt.

Second, Mr. Turner fails to mention that the State Parks environmental report overlooked the entire South Land Park section of the city. Your readers should take a look at Google maps to see how close these heavy locomotives would travel: within a few feet of a preschool playground; within feet of bedrooms, parks, pools, and schools; and on quiet streets that haven’t seen a train on the tracks in two generations.

Third, the article claims the expansion would cost “hundreds of thousands of dollars.” In fact, it is estimated that rail crossings alone would cost upward of \$3.2 million (8 residential streets would get crossing signals at about \$400,000 each). Rehabilitation of old tracks, laying new tracks, mitigation efforts, and building passenger stations at the Zoo, Pocket Road, and Hood will cost tens of millions of dollars more.

Fourth, we do not appreciate the tone of the article implying that we are somehow standing in the way of progress, tourism, or Mary Healy’s vision. SLPNA Board members personally met with Mary Healy last year and assured her that we were neutral on the rail expansion to the Zoo. Let us be clear: the section from the Zoo to Pocket Road is the objectionable portion.

Lastly, Mr. Turner strangely invokes Walt Disney’s name in his argument to run tourist trains in South Land Park. Our neighborhood unequivocally rejects a rumbling, smoke belching Matterhorn next to our homes. Sacramentans should be smart about growth. We prefer the abandoned land to be used for a neighborhood greenbelt and trail, not for a toxic tourist train. Homeowners, area students, and the City have already begun partnering on such a community endeavor. That is truly smart growth and definitely not NIMBYism.

Furthermore, your readers should know SLPNA only got involved after state planners failed to adequately notify residents along the rail corridor during the planning phase. We applaud Senator Darrell Steinberg for formally requesting in 2014 that State Parks listen to residents before adopting the plan. We also appreciate that City Council Member Jay Schenirer voiced consistent opposition to the South Land Park rail extension. These leaders helped us dodge this toxic train.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors,  
South Land Park Neighborhood Association  
Email: [slpna@slpna.org](mailto:slpna@slpna.org)