



August 18, 2015

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

Today, the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce, the Rodeo Drive Committee and the Conference and Visitors Bureau would like to issue a joint statement regarding the possible tour bus regulations being considered by the City. On behalf of all our member businesses, hotels, and partners, our recommendations are intended to keep Beverly Hills a vibrant, welcoming destination for visitors and full of unique experiences that can be had nowhere else.

Beverly Hills is in an enviable position. The City has built a brand with a worldwide reputation for glamour and luxury which, in 2014, attracted six million visitors. These visitors stay in our hotels, eat at our restaurants and last year spent an estimated \$1.7 billion, and are responsible for generating over 11,000 jobs and \$46m in tax revenue. Approximately 24% of our visitors come by bus and they spend an estimated \$137 per person, per day.

Our success, however, continues to be challenged by a fickle and competitive climate. Nearby luxury destinations such as the Beverly Center, The Grove, The Westfield Century City and South Coast Plaza all welcome the arrival of tour buses and, in fact, even pay for the right of their patronage. The Westfield Century City is launching an ambitious program to enlarge their mall with over 400,000 square feet of new retail space including Mario Batali's Eataly and a sizable area featuring luxury brands which can be found in Beverly Hills. If buses are prohibited on certain streets or are not provided a drop off location in the Triangle, Beverly Hills will be at a substantial disadvantage in the current "luxury arms race" that the Westside is experiencing.

It is within this context that our three organizations, representing hundreds of businesses and every hotel in the city, make the following recommendations:

- We need to permit a convenient drop-off location in the Triangle for tour groups of all sizes. None of the Commission's recommendations provide a location in the Triangle for large motor coaches to load or unload on weekdays other than the Santa Monica Blvd. location (which will be eliminated once construction of Santa Monica Blvd. is underway). We strongly encourage that a convenient location within the Triangle suitable for drop-off from large motor coaches be found as soon as possible in anticipation of the upcoming construction.

- We agree with the Commission's recommendation that a drop-off location adjacent to the Montage Hotel on the 200 block of North Beverly provides a beautiful point of arrival and departure befitting the City's luxurious image.

The drop-off location at the 500 block of North Canon (the cut-out near Beverly Gardens Park) would also work well for all types of vehicles due to the proximity of restrooms and the Visitor Center, not to mention the lily pond which is a favorite location for photo opportunities.

- We believe that the City should not eliminate large buses from Rodeo Drive by imposing a vehicle weight limit. The visual sensation of driving down the street not only provides an aspirational shopping experience to those visiting, but also brings transient shoppers to these stores, which generated \$655 million in taxable sales in 2014. Removing tour buses from Rodeo Drive takes away a seminal experience from tourists and, we fear, sends the wrong message. Further, the amount of exposure the City of Beverly Hills and Rodeo Drive receive via social media from visitors taking pictures and posting them while on these buses is immeasurable.
- We concur with the staff recommendation that the Third Street tour bus staging area should receive the sidewalk and landscaping improvements as passed in the 2015/16 Capital Improvement Program. As with the recommendations outlined above, we agree with the decision to devote resources to improve the initial impression of Beverly Hills has upon first time visitors.

Together, we believe that the economic vitality and social vibrancy of the City's commercial districts will be preserved and some of the competitive impact will be mitigated if we take these measures.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce, the Conference and Visitors Bureau, the Rodeo Drive Committee