

## Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group

### Summary of Tenth Meeting held April 3, 2006

The Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group convened their meeting on Monday, April 3, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. at the Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium.

Present: Working Group – Craig Kessler, Gerry Hans, Jeff Gardner, Louis Alvarado, Lynn Brown, Rulan Openshaw (alternate for Bernadette Soter), Susan Swan and Valerie Vanaman  
Patricia Malone, Council District 4 for Rory Fitzpatrick  
Steve Davis, Bureau of Engineering  
Mark Mariscal, Recreation and Parks  
Vicki Israel, Recreation and Parks  
Mike Shull, Recreation and Parks

Absent: Bernadette Soter, Clare Darden, George Grace, Jose Sigala, and Richard Bogy

Facilitator: Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager, Department of Recreation and Parks

Ms. Israel opened the meeting and called the role of the Working Group members and Department personnel. She then reported that to date, 8,108 comments regarding the Griffith Park Master Plan, have been received. She said, however, that many duplicate petitions had been received by her office and would not be included in the tally.

Mr. Mariscal shared that the top 10 adult or family outdoor activities as reported in the handout *Park and Recreation Trends in California*, parallel activities that take place in Griffith Park. Mr. Alvarado opined that it would have been helpful to have the number of park users broken down by ethnic groups. Mr. Hans stated that it was important for the Working Group to review the handout as it contained helpful information.

Mr. Regan then arrived at the meeting and began discussion of the first item on the agenda: review of meeting summaries. He stated that the Working Group is in receipt of three summaries and he has not yet received comments regarding those summaries. However, at the last meeting, some working group members expressed the desire to review tape recordings of those meetings before delivering any comments.

Mr. Gardner stated that the tapes were currently being transcribed but are not yet finished. Upon completion, they would be circulated to the working group members via e-mail. Ms. Vanaman suggested that review of the summaries be held over. She stated that additional topics to be covered included the built facilities, vehicular access and circulation, which would probably be combined with non-vehicular access. The topic of watersheds may also be included for study.

Mr. Hans brought the discussion back to the duplicate petitions that had been received, asking for a count of those. Ms. Israel replied 30-some. She said the duplicates appeared to be a faxed version which matched to an original version. Mr. Hans suggested that it had been an unintentional error, and there was agreement.

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Ms. Vanaman then stated that the Working Group feels very strongly about the absence of a needs assessment study. She then shared the sub-committee's re-write of the Built Environment chapter entitled "Built Facilities." By definition, built facilities are man made structures in the park, including buildings and developed recreational areas. Eleven categories of built facilities were identified.

The first category was restrooms. Currently, there is no design consistency for restrooms throughout the park. Various working group members commented on the lack of maintenance at some of the restrooms. Mr. Regan agreed that the restrooms in the park are difficult to maintain and that they withstand a lot of "abuse." He commented that visitors take note of the conditions of the restrooms and will avoid a park if the restrooms are not functional or are very dirty. Ms. Vanaman stated that the entire park should have a rustic feel and all of the restrooms should have a rustic appearance. Mr. Openshaw shared that there are restrooms in Europe that are self-cleaning with self-sanitizing capabilities. He stated that even if these types of restrooms may be more costly initially, they would pay for themselves in the long run.

Meeting rooms was the second category. Nine different venues were identified as having meeting room space that is available primarily on a fee for use basis. The location of existing meeting rooms include: Griffith Park Golf Clubhouse, Travel Town, the Los Angeles Zoo, the Autry Museum, the Greek Theater, Friendship Auditorium, Griffith Park Camp, Camp Hollywoodland, and the Ranger Station. Given the range of meeting rooms currently available, it was the sub-committee's recommendation that there is no need to add structures in the park for the purpose of providing additional meeting room space.

The third category was visitor centers and ranger stations. A needs assessment of the space necessary for an effective visitors centers and the space necessary to provide usable working space for essential park employees must be conducted prior to any remodeling of existing structures. For example, the study would determine which employee positions are essential to being housed at the Ranger Station area. Non-essential positions could be relocated to other areas. The chapter re-write stated "...a ranger sub-station in Fern Dell houses a Park Ranger allowing timely response for that side of the Park." Mr. Mariscal stated that the house at that location is not a sub-station but an actual residence where a park ranger happens to live. Ms. Swan stated that the Fern Dell area of the park needed a ranger sub-station and Mr. Alvarado agreed, saying that crime incidents are higher in that area of the park. Mr. Regan suggested that this was an operational issue that could be addressed in another section of the master plan re-write.

The discussion moved on to the fourth category: recreational area structures. These structures include: train ride, pony rides, Tregnan Golf Academy, Los Feliz Golf Course, merry-go-round, Wilson-Harding Golf Complex, Los Angeles Zoo, Autry National Center, Travel Town, Los Angeles Live Steamers, Los Angeles Equestrian Center, Martinez Arena, Griffith Park Boys Camp, Camp Hollywoodland, Greek Theater, Roosevelt Golf Course, and the Griffith Observatory. It was pointed out that individual master plans exist for nine separate areas of the park and this could present a problem in developing a cohesive, uniform Griffith Park Master

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Plan. It was noted that the Los Angeles Zoo is a separate department, operating independently of Recreation and Parks. Ms. Vanaman asked if documentation exists confining the zoo to their current “footprint.” Mr. Shull acknowledged documentation probably exists and that he would research it.

Picnic Areas was the fifth category with at least 10 developed picnic areas being identified as formal picnic sites. Again, it was stated that any addition or change to the existing picnic areas should be preceded by a needs study. Particular attention needs to be paid to days of high impact usage such as weekends and holidays so that needs on those days can be managed without a need to encumber existing open space for developed picnic areas.

The sixth category was Municipal Plunges. There are three plunges in Griffith Park. Two of the plunges are available for use by campers only at Griffith Park Camp and Camp Hollywoodland. It was the sub-committee’s recommendation that the plunge at Los Feliz Boulevard is a historical WPA structure that must be preserved and that destination swimming facilities, such as a Family Aquatic Center, should be located outside of Griffith Park.

Sports Fields is the seventh category. There are a variety of sports fields but the exact number of each type is unknown at this time. Mr. Kessler suggested that this category be broken down into sub-sections for each type of sports fields since they play an important role in the park but have not been given much “ink space” in the chapter re-write. Ms. Vanaman further explained that the sub-committee’s suggestion is for a needs study to be conducted, followed by additional discussion. Mr. Regan stated that it would be a good idea for everyone to look at each of the categories in this chapter and submit comments to the sub-committee.

The remaining categories: Restaurants and Food Concessions, Water Tanks, Utilities, and Miscellaneous Recreational Facilities were discussed in general. Ms. Vanaman stated the goal of the sub-committee in re-writing this chapter was to establish principals and guidelines rather than micro-managing the park.

Ms. Vanaman also shared the sub-committee’s work on Maintenance and Maintenance Areas in the park. Preservation and maintenance of the park’s existing open spaces and facilities must be a high priority. She also stated that Upgrades and Additions must also be consistent with preserving the park’s Urban Wilderness Identity. Design Guidelines should also take the Urban Wilderness Identity into consideration and efforts should be made to minimize urbanization of the park.

Ms. Vanaman concluded the sub-committee’s re-write by asking for additional input for “Specific Goals and Objectives.” That additional comments and input from other members are both welcome and necessary to complete this portion of the chapter.

Mr. Regan announced that the next Working Group meeting date will be Monday, May 1 at 6:30pm at the Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium. He then reminded the audience that public comments are limited to two minutes.

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The following public comments were made:

- An inquiry was made asking if the Master Plan draft would be replaced with the Working Group re-write. Mr. Regan clarified that at the end of this Working Group process, the Master Plan draft and Working Group re-write would be coalesced by a consultant and then presented to the Rec and Parks Commission.
- Representatives from the Institute of Divine Metaphysical Research expressed concerns regarding a proposed parking structure to be located across the street from Friendship Auditorium. They are against fee parking and having to park across the street from a facility they have been using for the past 20 years. They pay around \$2,000,000 per year for the use of this facility. Currently, they have no parking problems. Mr. Hans asked how many attendees they have. The representative answered 400-500.
- A comment was made that parking structures don't have a chance in meeting operational expenses, and that they present both liability and security problems.

This concluded the Working Group meeting for April 3.