

Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group Meeting Summary – January 8, 2007

The Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group convened their meeting on Monday, January 8, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. at the Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium.

Present: Working Group – Bernadette Soter, Clare Darden, Craig Kessler, George Grace, Gerry Hans, Jeff Gardner, Richard Bogy, Susan Swan, Valerie Vanaman, and Lynn Brown

Patricia Malone, Council District 4
Mark Mariscal, Recreation and Parks
Tom McCall, Recreation and Parks
Mike Shull, Recreation and Parks

Absent: Jose Sigala, Louis Alvarado

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

Mr. Regan opened the meeting by introducing Christina Iwata as the new Griffith Region Secretary. Ms. Iwata will be taking the summaries for the Griffith Park Master Plan meetings. Mr. Regan also announced that beginning January 1, 2007, Vicki Israel has been given back the full responsibility of managing the Griffith Region.

A short discussion on the meeting summaries for May, September, and October 2006, followed. The Working Group reviewed the May 2006 summary and approved it for posting on the Department's website. The September and October 2006 summaries are to be reviewed and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Regan opened the discussion of Chapters. Ms. Bernadette Soter requested to start the discussion of Chapters with the Built Chapter Amendment: Central Service Yard followed by the Amendments to the Mobility Chapters. Mr. Jeff Gardner asked regarding a missing environmental review that was previously requested. Mr. Regan asked Mike Shull the status of the environmental review. According to Mr. Shull's recollection, the Working Group would provide him with a draft document to be evaluated and he would then give the Group the time frame. Ms. Soter agreed with Mr. Shull. She then inquired about the Elysian Park Master Plan's Environmental Report Chapter. Ms. Soter asked Mr. Shull if they could have a separate meeting as a tutorial on how does the Environmental Chapter reflect the document and vice versa.

Last year, a tour of the Central Service Yard (CSY) was conducted by some members of the Working Group. During the tour, they viewed the office buildings, asphalt, gravel, and areas utilized as parking for City vehicles. The Group would like to help organize the Department property for best use in the future. Ms. Soter suggested adding this to the Built Facilities Chapter. Before reading the Draft Addendum to the Built Facilities Chapter document, she pointed out two corrections: Third line, paragraph 2 should read "approximately 28-acre" instead of "approximately 31-acre"; and first line, paragraph 3 should read "for recreation and is not open to park-goers." After reading the document, Ms. Soter acknowledged that RAP staff cannot be entirely evicted from CSY. The Working Group is hoping to work with the Department

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to be able to free up portion of the parcel in order to add acreage for public use without spending funds for parkland acquisition.

Mr. Regan mentioned that the CSY is also utilized by the Bureau of Street Services and General Services Department's Central Stores. The Central Stores provide Recreation and Parks with equipment and supplies. Mr. Regan also stated that majority of non-RAP staff located at CSY, other than Street Services, are there to support RAP operations

Ms. Soter advised RAP staff they are not asking for the Department to vacate CSY but to free up some areas for park use to adopt in Built Facility Chapter. Kevin Regan stated that it is a good idea to relocate and centralize RAP operations but would be a huge project.

Mr. Regan then proceeded with the review of the amendments to the document. Ms. Soter would E-mail the revised Mobility Chapter document to Christina Iwata and Valerie Vanaman. Ms. Valerie Vanaman prepared the Fourth Draft of the Mobility Chapter document collaborating suggestions made and discussions at the sub-committee meetings. After discussions of the document, the group agreed on the following:

- That the underlined sentence on page 5, under C. Roads, be deleted and that the italicized sentence should be changed to "Consideration should be given to improving the merry-go-round loop road connection to provide a temporary alternate route for traffic within the park when major events preclude access to and from Griffith Park Drive."
- That the underlined sentence on page 17, Under 5B, be replaced with the same verbiage as on page 5, "Consideration should be given to improving the merry-go-round loop road connection to provide a temporary alternate route for traffic within the park when major events preclude access to and from Griffith Park Drive."
- That footnote 6 on page 7, be omitted; and Ms. Vanaman had noted the changes to be made under F. Parking on the same page.
- That the italicized phrase on page 9, under G. Parking Structures, be deleted.
- That the italicized sentence on page 17, under 3C be deleted, and adopt the underlined sentence.
- Due to quoted prices on the document, Mark Mariscal suggested that "2006" be added on page 10, second paragraph. This would then read as "Ticket holders to the Greek Theater's 2006 seasonal concerts choose from three options..."

After a lengthy discussion of the possibility of recommending parking structures in Griffith Park at some future date, the Working Group concluded that the parking structures would urbanize and detract from the park. The Working Group agreed that there appears to be ample parking in Griffith Park for most daily uses except for limited high impact days (i.e., Mother's Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Memorial Day weekend, 5K/10K runs, picnics, etc). Should the need ever arise for more parking, the Working Group would hope that the City accommodate additional parked vehicles without the expense and negative impacts of parking structures. Mr. Bogy

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called the question and the Working Group voted with nine members voting against parking structures and one member voting in its favor.

Ms. Soter continued to discuss the Rim of the Valley Trail Amendment Mobility Chapter prepared by Lynn Brown. After Ms. Brown read the amendment, Mr. Shull stated that Volunteer Neighborhood Oversight Committee (VNOC) should not be mentioned on the draft. Ms. Brown then stated the connection that the various parks have through the Rim of the Valley. However, according to Mr. Shull, though there are various parks associated with the Rim of the Valley, not all of them have been officially connected. This is due to different agencies involved and several pieces to be put together. After the discussion on the trail linkages, everyone agreed to strike out the following statement under iii. Opportunities for Trail Linkages:

“The effort has been allocated \$2 Million by local VNOC committees of the City Department of Recreation and Parks as well as over 170 Council Files addressing the connections, payment for and improvements for trails in Los Angeles. There is reference to this trail alignment in 15 of the 35 community plans administered by the City’s Department of Planning.”

Ms. Soter informed everyone that at the last sub-committee meeting she attended, the park management was discussed. She stated, a Superintendent was implemented but came along was a Griffith Region. According to Ms. Soter, the draft never stated that creating a Superintendent for the Griffith Park would mean creating a new region, which is Griffith Region. Facilities and sections under Griffith Region were stated by Mr. Regan and Mr. Mariscal. These are Griffith Park, Camping Division, Municipal Sports, Yucca Recreation Center, Wattles, Runyon Canyon, and Pershing Square. The sub-committee was a little surprised by how Griffith Region was created and configured. Their suggestion is perhaps, instead of having a Superintendent for Griffith Region, have one for regional parks. Mr. Regan informed the Working Group of a previous budget request submitted for this function, however, it did not get approved. When asked the reason why it was denied, he clearly stated that Superintendent’s responsibility is to manage a large geographic area. Since Griffith Park is a relatively small area in comparison to other regions, it was decided to include Citywide sections under this new region. No further comment was made.

Mr. George Grace appreciated the receipt of the one-year strategic plan. Goal #4 LA Parks Foundation, however, caught his attention and inquired on the status of the 501c3. Per Kevin Regan, the plan has been established by the Recreation and Parks General Manager, but is currently in the Mayor’s office for approval. Mr. Grace then asked if possible board members have been chosen and if he could see the list. However, due to the status of this plan, it is not a public document as of yet. Ms. Soter asked if this is or will be a Mayor function. Mr. Regan clarified these type of plans need to go through the process and Mayor’s approval. Ms. Vanaman asked if the foundation would be under RAP. Mr. Regan stated that the foundation would work at the community level but in support of Department functions and programs. Mr. Regan informed the group that the agenda would be generated from the RAP Board of Commissioners office when asked by Ms. Soter. Privatizing the park was a concern Ms. Soter expressed. Mr. Regan and Mr. Mariscal both disagreed with privatizing the park. Mr. Mariscal then said it is to raise funds for recreation programs, such as the role of the Library Foundation and the Long Beach Parks & Recreation Foundation.

Mr. Grace reminded Mr. Regan of a request to get a copy of the Puck contract.

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Mr. Shull was asked a question regarding a rectangular parcel within Griffith Park, which is owned by RKO. This land is adjacent to Mountly Drive. He requested for the history on how it became a private property. Mr. Regan requested Mike Shull to research and prepare a report.

Public Comments include the following:

- Last year, one of Pasadena's special events used shuttles to transport event goers to six different venues. There were no problems regarding street parking and shuttle use.
- In the October 2006 issue of the National Geographic (with cover story on places we must save), 80% was devoted to saving parklands.
- With the global warming going on, we should not be overly concerned in enticing vehicles through Griffith Park. It is inappropriate to think about at this time.
- Disagrees that there is no such thing as the Melendez draft, which in fact is the only Master Plan draft there is. Hoping that the group provide with more text on the draft.
- Enjoying the trails without structures within the parkland. Appreciates all the time given by everyone in the working group.
- Hoping that the priority is to keep the road closed in the center of the park.
- Confusion on the discussion on highly recommended structure. Highly recommended that any reference on parking structure or parking plans in the future must be predicated on statistically viable and supportable needs studies before any discussion is done. This will eliminate the guess works that take place in the meeting.
- Needs clarification on the merry-go-round loop discussion; Lots 1, 2, and 3.
- The easiest way to solve the traffic control problem is to create a campaign and to advertise carpooling.
- On the Management Chapter, state kinds of agencies or bodies that park management should be interacting with or co-managing such as the LA River, anything on the park management's expertise that could be useful or would be necessary to improve Griffith Park. Priorities on actions by park management should also be included in the Management Chapter.
- Appreciation to the volunteer and commended the group for a good job. Should keep trying and questioning for exemplary
- Help preserve the park.

The next Working Group meeting will be held Monday, February 5, 2007. This concluded the Working Group meeting for January 8, 2007.