

PASADENA CENTRAL PARK

MASTER PLAN

1989 – 2006 REDLINE VERSION

December, 2006

KEY TO EDITS:

- Text from original Master Plan to remain
- ~~Text deleted from original Master Plan~~
- Text added to Master Plan

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Todd Bennitt, Melendrez Landscape & Architecture
Claire Bogaard - People for Pasadena Parks
Maggie Campbell – Old Pasadena Management District
Charlie Clark, Pasadena Lawn Bowlers Club
Donald Deise, Pasadena Lawn Bowlers Club
Leslie Diaz – Director, El Centro de Acción Social
Jack Edwards - Pasadena Lawn Bowlers Club
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John Hrovat - Urban Partners
Jim Marrin - Castle Green Apartments
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5 September 1989

Dear Friends of Central Park:

It is with a great deal of pleasure that we present herein a Master Plan proposal to guide the revitalization of Central Park—one of Pasadena's oldest parks. The prescriptions for future development include a comprehensive design as well as a detailed selection of plant material, park equipment, furnishings, fencing, lighting, and structures.

Three operating principles guided our work; (i) that the design goals and objectives arrived at through an exhaustive community participation process be respected, (ii) that the historic character of the park be preserved and enhanced, and (iii) that the plan be conscientious of the City's resource limitations and be implementable in its parts as well as the whole. We believe we have met our objectives in this Master Plan document.

It is important that we acknowledge that this plan has been the result of an active community, dedicated public officials and civic leaders working together over a seven-month period. Together we were charged with the mission of articulating the problems and opportunities that would form the Park Program for the Master Plan to revitalize Central Park. The unique participatory process used which consisted of a series of community design workshops, lends legitimacy to this plan and identifies a caring park constituency who can be counted on for support and input in the future as the Master Plan is implemented. The community design workshops, each attended by between 25 and 40 people, representing a wide spectrum of interests, including park users, near-by residents, and business people, representatives from El Centro de Accion and Union Station, social service providers, police and several members from various City departments.

This Master Plan, which was commissioned by the Pasadena Community Development Corporation, summarizes the history, existing conditions, problems and opportunities, goals and objectives and a recommended design program for the future of the Park. The Plan is offered up as the work of dozens of individuals who have given of their time and ideas in the hopes of finding a brighter future for Central Park. We, the consultants, view this Plan as a prelude to the revitalization of a significant part of the Pasadena heritage. We would like to extend our thanks to all those involved who have made this participatory process and Master Plan a success. We are pleased to have been involved and are excited by the prospects of a revitalized Central Park.

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Edmund Frye, Rose Tree Cottage

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~~The Central Park Master Plan was prepared for the City of Pasadena in cooperation with:~~

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~~Robert Reagan, Vice Chairperson~~

~~Robert F. Ford~~

~~Melba R. Guy~~

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~~I. DESIGN PROGRAM~~

~~As part of the first phase of master planning for Central Park, a Design Program was established. This was done through a participatory process with members of the Pasadena community, the City of Pasadena staff and public officials. The Design Program was based on a series of goals and objectives for the revitalization of the Park that had also been established as part of the process. These goals and objectives, combined with the Design Program provide the framework for the establishment of the Master Plan. Briefly, the goals and objectives that were established can be summarized as follows:~~

~~A. Goals and Objectives~~

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

In the fall of 1989, a Draft Master Plan for Central Park was presented to the community. The Central Park Master Plan was intended to provide a guide for the revitalization of Central Park—one of Pasadena's oldest parks. The draft plan included a comprehensive design as well as a detailed selection of plant materials, park equipment, furnishings, fencing, lighting, and structures.

The City retained the services of two Los Angeles firms to manage the Master Plan effort. Jean Marie Gath from The SWA Group and Michael J. Pittas from Design/Development Services, together with members of their firms, served as consultants for the Central Park Master Plan. Three operating principles guided their work:

1. That the design goals and objectives, arrived at through an exhaustive community participation, be respected;
2. That the historic character of the Park be preserved and enhanced; and
3. That the plan takes into account the City's resource limitations and be implemented in its parts as well as the whole.

The consultant noted that the draft plan was the result of an active community, dedicated public officials, and civic leaders working together over a seven-month period. The participatory process consisted of a series of community design workshops, each attended by between 25 and 40 persons representing a wide spectrum of interests including park users, nearby residents, and business people. There were also representatives from Castle Green, El Centro de Accion, Union Station, Lawn Bowling Club, the Pasadena Police Department, and various other City departments.

The only significant element of the plan that was constructed during the 1990's was a new playground. In 1998, the City received a \$200,000 grant for improvements to both

Central Park and Memorial Park from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). The grant was to be used for improvements to the two parks which are adjacent to the Gold Line Stations. It was decided to use the MTA grant for improved lighting in both parks.

In 2002, a group of interested persons established a Central Park Task Force to address a variety of problems at Central Park. A number of meetings were held and nearby residents, businesses, the developer of the Del Mar Light Rail complex, and various City representatives participated. An update of the Central Park Master Plan emerged as a key goal during these meetings. The update would focus on ways to make the implementation of the plan more likely and to simplify the proposed renovations. The extensive gardens proposed for the north end of the park and the central gazebo seemed overly complex and would be difficult to implement. In addition, they did not seem consistent with the way the park is used by the community.

In 2004, the first phase of the Master Plan update was completed when the City of Pasadena City Council approved an amendment to the plan that allowed the use of tinted concrete in lieu of decomposed granite for the primary walkways in the park. Residential Impact Fee revenue became available for Central Park improvements and the task force members felt that the replacement of the park's deteriorated walkways was a high priority. Concrete was recommended in lieu of decomposed granite to make the walkways more accessible and to reduce maintenance costs. The revision also included the selection of the type of walkway lights, benches, waste containers, and bollards to be used throughout the park. In 2005, approximately 75% of the walkways were replaced, and new bollards, benches, and waste containers were installed through the park.

In 2004, the Master Plan was also revised to shift the proposed location of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial to Memorial Park.

B. HISTORY OF CENTRAL PARK

Central Park and Memorial Park, originally called Library Park, are the two oldest parks in the City of Pasadena. Much of the credit for establishing Central Park can be attributed to the efforts of Mayor Weight, who in 1901 supported a public improvement bond that provided for the purchase of land soon to become the City's first parks.

Central Park was originally known as South Park and catered to the guests of the downtown hotels, most notably the adjacent Hotel Green. Under the direction of landscape architect Thomas Chisholm, plantings were carefully selected to display both variety and visual beauty.

By the early 1920s, there were clay roque courts, a small building to house the tourist club and the chess club, a lawn bowling green, and a serpentine pathway system throughout Central Park.

In 1925, the City Directors led by their Chairman, Hiram W. Wadsworth, approved a redesign for both Library Park and Central Park. Ralph D. Cornell, a landscape architect from Los Angeles, was retained by the City for the redesign of both parks. The serpentine pathways were replaced by a simplified pathway system which continues to grace Central Park today. During the 1920s, well known architect Wallace Neff designed a clubhouse for the Lawn Bowling Club. The "tourist house" was relocated to the south end of Central Park and in the mid-1970s became the headquarters of El Centro de Acción Social, Inc.

In 1983, both Memorial Park and Central Park were listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributors to the Old Pasadena Historic District.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- (1) Establish a Strong Coherent Image for the Park
- (2) Maintain and enhance the Historic Character of the Park
- (3) Provide for a Secure and Safe park
- ~~(4) Sustain the current level of Active Recreation~~
- ~~(9)(4) Improve the level of Park Maintenance and Cleanliness~~
- (5) Enhance opportunities for Children's Use
- ~~(6) Provide opportunities for Entertainment and Celebration~~
- ~~(7)(6) Provide Passive Recreational experiences~~
- (7) Sustain the current level of active recreation
- (8) Retain the Park's Accessibility to all potential users
- ~~(10) Discourage Privatization of the Park~~
- ~~(11) Encourage Surrounding Developments to Relate to the Park~~

B. Design Program

~~The Design Program was then prepared in order to provide a series of images and general concepts for achieving these goals and objectives. It is intended to convey the character and quality envisioned for future park improvements. (These are contained in the Central Park Master Plan Park Program document, dated March 1989.) In summary, the Design Program consists of four primary components: Park features, Park Furnishings/Systems, Park Programming and Internal issues. Park Features are special elements that provide a focal point or visual accent within the Park. They may include a botanical garden, a performance gazebo or pavilion, lawn bowling, open meadows and a children's play area. Water elements may also be used to provide a special focal point. The combination of these facilities creates a multi-use environment that can attract a range of park users, increasing the "usability" of the Park.~~

~~Park Furnishings/Systems are those elements that provide the framework and basic structure for the Park. These include plantings of turf, groundcover, trees, shrubs and hedges that, together, create the overall park environment. Added to this are items such as fencing, lighting and benches.~~

~~Park Programming encourages a range of activities and festivities in order to "activate" the park and increase the public's awareness of Central Park as a park facility. Although the master plan does not provide an operating program for the park, it does provide the physical environment to encourage and accommodate such activities.~~

~~The fourth and final component of the Design Program is External issues, addressing the Park's relationship to adjacent development. This includes the consideration of pedestrian~~

~~crosswalks, linking the park to the railroad station on Raymond Avenue, to the buildings and activities along Fair Oaks Avenue and the two hundred residential units along Dayton Street.~~

~~The following Master Plan has incorporated this Design Program and is intended to implement in a physical form, the goals and objectives established for the future of Central Park.~~

~~II. PARK DESIGN PLAN~~

~~The proposed park design for Central Park is best described as a design that:~~

- ~~(1) Focuses on the preservation of the Park's historic character~~
- ~~(2) Provides for Park conservation~~
- ~~(3) Enhances the Park's existing landscape material and plant palette~~
- ~~(4) Animates the Park's facilities~~
- ~~(5) Presents a clear identity for the Park; and~~
- ~~(6) Celebrates a civic garden available to all Pasadena citizens.~~

In order to implement the Goals and Objectives, the Master Plan was created. The program is intended to convey the character and quality envisioned for future Park improvements. In summary, the Master Plan consists of the following components:

- Park Features
- Park Furnishings and Systems
- Accessibility
- External Issues
- Phasing of Improvements

Park Features are special elements that provide a focal point or visual accent within the park. They may include an open meadow, the existing fountain, landscaping, lawn bowling green, and the children's play area. The combination of these facilities creates a multi-use environment that can attract a wide range of park users.

Park Furnishings/Systems are those elements that provide the framework and basic structure for the park. These include plantings of trees, turf, groundcover, and shrubs that together create the overall environment. Fencing, lighting, benches, and waste containers are other important components. It is important that these elements be selected and installed in a way that is harmonious with the character of the park.

Accessibility allows for the disabled, mobility impaired, and their caregivers to enjoy Central Park.

Park Programming refers to the use of the park by groups or organizations; for example, small gatherings for events, such as "art shows" that benefit local nonprofits and other organizations and bring additional life to the park. Per the City's policy for large events in public parks, parks are primarily for the use of the general public and not for special events. The policy sets out specific requirements and limitations for large events in Central Park.