

## Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group Meeting Summary – September 11, 2006

The Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group convened their meeting on Monday, September 11, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. at the Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium.

Present: Working Group – Bernadette Soter, Clare Darden, Jim Gilbert (alternate for Craig Kessler), George Grace, Gerry Hans, Jeff Gardner, Louis Alvarado, Lynn Brown, Susan Swan, and Valerie Vanaman.

Patricia Malone, Council District 4  
Rory Fitzpatrick, Council District 4  
Steve Davis, Bureau of Engineering  
Darryl Ford, Recreation and Parks

Absent: Jose Sigala, Richard Bogy,

Facilitator: Vicki Israel, Superintendent, Griffith Region, Department of Recreation and Parks

Ms. Israel thanked everyone present for attending the meeting and called roll for Working Group Members and City Employees.

Ms. Israel stated that the Working Group requested to hear presentations from the Chief Park Ranger regarding traffic flow and the Golf Manager regarding improvements to golf courses in Griffith Park.

Acting Chief Park Ranger Albert Torres spoke about vehicle traffic and signage in Griffith Park. He indicated that the posting of 25 mph speed limit signs are set by City ordinance, unless designated otherwise. Whenever commuters observe Park Rangers writing a citation, they do tend to slow down. Also, when commuters see their speed limit flashing electronically next to speed limit signs, they will slow down. Griffith Park is also a commuter corridor and there are different traffic patterns on weekdays versus weekends. By ordinance, park roads belong to the Department of Recreation and Parks and therefore, the Department is responsible for traffic, parking, and any other signs. The Department of Transportation provides recommendations. At the main entrance to Griffith Park, there is a welcome sign with a list of “do’s and dont’s.”

At this point, Ms. Vanaman joined the meeting and stated she was caught in a “traffic jam.” Chief Torres stated that whenever there is a traffic jam in the park, it is usually due to an incident on the freeway.

Ms. Brown asked if anything could be done to discourage motorists from using the park as a freeway shortcut. Chief Torres replied that a police presence helps to deter motorists from speeding in the park. He further explained that even with the addition of stop signs, motorists are not hindered from using the park as a shortcut and that one of the reasons people commute through the park is because it provides for a more pleasant drive.

Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group  
Meeting Summary – September 11, 2006

Mr. Hans stated he was pleased that the Department of Transportation does not dictate how traffic problems are handled in Griffith Park and that this provides a chance for innovative techniques to be utilized. He asked if Chief Torres had heard of any new ideas, such as curb extensions. Chief Torres responded that he would like to take a closer look at those new ideas. He did indicate to the group that whenever the park hosts a huge event, adjustments are made. For example, parking restrictions are relaxed during the Jimmy Stewart Marathon.

Mr. Gardner asked a series of questions regarding traffic problem areas, widening the roads and utilizing bridges for golf carts. Chief Torres stated that golf carts assist in slowing down vehicle traffic and that traffic congestion changes with the type of activity in the park. The park can only handle so many cars at one time, so that problem takes care of itself. He does not see widening roads as a solution because it takes away from other things, such as equestrian trails, golf courses, or trees. Chief Torres stated that the immediate need is for safety rather than the presence of more people or cars.

Ms. Vanaman asked for clarification between a trail and a road. Chief Torres stated that anything unpaved is considered a trail and that there is approximately 30 miles of paved road throughout the park.

Ms. Soter asked about the difference in having areas of the interior park closed to traffic. Chief Torres replied that there is no comparison. The amount of illegal dumping, crime, and graffiti are significantly reduced since the road closures.

Mr. Grace asked Chief Torres to comment on speed bumps. Chief Torres replied that speed bumps are not viable for the park since they hinder emergency vehicles. He indicated that speed humps, on the other hand, are great for slowing down motorists as they cannot speed over them.

Ms. Vanaman asked if Recreation and Parks is responsible for keeping the roads maintained throughout the park and Chief Torres indicated that all of the up keep comes from the Department's budget.

This concluded Chief Torres' presentation and Ms. Israel thanked him for attending the meeting as well as for his years of service to the Department.

Ms. Israel then introduced Mr. James Ward, who is in charge of all of the Department's golf courses and facilities.

Mr. Ward shared that there are five facilities in Griffith Park that are golf related. They include Wilson Harding, Roosevelt, Los Feliz, and the Tregnan golf academy. The Golf Division was formed five years ago and does a five-year forecast of projects and funds them using two years worth of golf surcharge. He indicated that the future of golf in Griffith Park is based on safety and being fiscally conservative. The top goal at Griffith Park is getting reclaimed water to the facilities. The majority of water in the area is from the Glendale treatment plant. During times of drought, the golf courses are exempt from City regulations regarding water usage. Roosevelt Golf Course is 3<sup>rd</sup> in line Citywide for improvements that include irrigation and greens

## Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group Meeting Summary – September 11, 2006

reconstruction and that construction may begin in 2008 or 2009. He shared that the Golf Division is looking into using a flashing walkway or curb outs for golf cart crossings. Other projects include upkeep, fence repair and renovation to the club house at Griffith Park, and an irrigation system for Los Feliz. Reclaimed water projects and safety issues are the priority.

Ms. Soter wanted an assurance that the Quonset Hut at the Los Feliz Golf Course would not turn into a fast food restaurant. Mr. Ward assured everyone that it would not and that the Quonset Hut would stay the way it is. He stated that the Golf Division has an advisory committee and everything they do is done in a public forum.

Ms. Soter asked about wildlife corridors and obtaining Audubon status for the golf courses in Griffith Park. Mr. Ward stated that most golf courses are not polluters, but are pristine and attract a variety of wildlife such as coyote, deer, bobcat, skunks, and rabbits. Presently, Audubon status has not been actively sought for golf courses in Griffith Park.

Mr. Ward then explained the use of pesticides and stated that all golf course supervisors are state licensed for pesticide application. Greens are treated curatively and while chemicals are used to control fungus and insect problems, they are not used for preventive measures. Due to the use of reclaimed water, the amount of fertilizer used is greatly reduced.

Mr. Ward shared that current working conditions at the golf service yard are not the best and within the next 15 years, it will have to be relocated or moved. Due to the type of machinery required to mow the greens and the fact that they are not “street legal” the service yard must be in close proximity to the golf course and cannot be relocated to CSY.

Next, Ms. Vanaman gave a subcommittee report on the Mobility Chapter. This included a general introduction with the need to preserve the park’s urban identity and careful attention to park wide modes of travel as well as policies to regulate the manner in which various user groups access and use of the park.

The first part of the chapter covers vehicle access and circulation. Entrances and exits are to be designed to reflect the urban wilderness. One of the challenges is the use of correct names for roads. No one wants the interior roads re-opened to vehicle traffic and while through traffic is a major issues, there is no current traffic study of the number of vehicles using the park as a thorough way and there are no consistent measures for control. An innovative way must be used to deal with this problem. On high use days, a shuttle system and form of public transit may be necessary. Although the Melendrez draft promotes additional parking structures, no data exists to support this. Parking can be used to control overuse of the park. Priority should be given to resurfacing parking lots. Visitor information is currently being updated. Greenery should be carefully designed and maintained. Additional work is necessary to complete this chapter and subsequent chapters include water management and park management.

Comments from the Working Group included:

- The need for a separate discussion of bicycle routes and paths
- The need for sidewalks in order to keep pedestrians from walking in the roadway

Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group  
Meeting Summary – September 11, 2006

- The need for special event parking and the use of a shuttle system
- The need for a public transit system to get people to and through the park
- The increase of traffic is a hazard to people and wildlife
- Increasing the number of trails causes maintenance problems
- The need to encourage the use of recognized trails only

Public Comment included the following:

- The widening of fire roads causes the removal of additional trees and vegetation
- Parking lots have never been observed to be full
- Request for a bike stop with air pressure
- Thanks to the Working Group for preserving the wilderness and for volunteering to do this

This concluded the meeting for September 11, 2006.