



# BALBOA PARK

parking, circulation, and land use study



## Discovery Phase White Paper

August 2003



Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, Ltd.

Civitas, Inc.

TDA, Inc.

L.J. Black Consulting Group

Milford Wayne Donaldson

HR & A

# Credits

## City of San Diego Park and Recreation

Ellen Oppenheim, Director

Michael Behan, Deputy Director

Mark Marney, Project Officer II

Charles P. Daniels, Park Designer

Devere "Div" Brasted, District Manager

Kathleen Hasenauer, District Manager

Beth Murray, Assistant to City Manager

Toni Atkins, San Diego City Council Member

Christine Kehoe, California State Assembly

## Balboa Park Committee

Daniel T. Mazzella, Chair

Darlene Davies, Co-Chair

Laurie Burgett

Vicki Granowitz

Dr. Jeffrey Kirsch

Nancy Rodriguez

Paul Rucci

Joe Silverman

Jeffery Tom

Warren Simon

Michael Stepner



All those community members who have volunteered their time, passion, and knowledge to assist the Consultant Team in this effort

# Contents

## I. Project Overview

Introduction .....	1
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## II. Discovery Forum Synthesis

Introduction .....	4
Opening Remarks .....	7
Goals .....	8
Breakout Sessions .....	9
Table Presentations .....	11

## III. Stakeholder Outreach

Community Outreach .....	16
Earth Day .....	17
Summary of Visitor Transportation Survey .....	21
Sample of Visitor Transportation Survey .....	23

## IV. Community Workshops Summary

Workshop 1: Balboa Park Cultural Partnership, June 3 2003 .....	24
Workshop 2: Center City Development Corporation, June 3 2003 .....	25
Workshop 3: Balboa Park Cultural Partnership, June 4 2003 .....	26
Workshop 4: Greater Golden Hill Plan, Greater North Park Group, Uptown Planners, June 4 2003 ..	29
Workshop 5: Balboa Park Task Force, June 5 2003 .....	31
In the News .....	32
Project References .....	36



Aerial photograph of Balboa Park



## Introduction

### Preliminary Research

In January 2003 the firms Jones & Jones and Civitas were selected to head up the Balboa Park Parking, Circulation, and Land Use Study. The Project Team has spent the past four months collecting, reviewing, and synthesizing relevant Balboa Park related studies, reports, and technical data.

### Project Focus

The intended focus of the Study is to generate alternative strategies for addressing parking, circulation, and land use challenges within the Park's Central Mesa and Inspiration Point areas. The Team felt that in order to effectively address these issues of access, circulation, land use, and parking, the Study analysis needed to include the Balboa Park's entire area, the surrounding neighborhoods, and Downtown. This holistic approach allows for solutions to emerge that address park-wide challenges while engaging in a broader dialogue with Park and community stakeholders.

### Site Reconnaissance

Our site analysis included extensive exploration of the Park's physical grounds, walking trails, streets, paths, gardens, mesas, and canyons. We reviewed the developed plans from the original design drawings through the most recent precise plans. The Team developed a photographic record of the Park's unique areas, historic buildings, gardens, and service facilities. Also, we have studied the various vistas and view points both into and out of the Park to better understand links to the city and neighboring communities.

From the reconnaissance effort we created analysis drawings of the Park; we have also recorded our initial observations regarding Park challenges and needs.

### Early Observations

Through the simultaneous effort of site analyses and community outreach, a number of observations regarding Park needs and challenges became clear. The Balboa Park 1989 Master Plan had developed a Vision Statement and a number of planning goals that were intended to guide future improvements and interventions within the Park. We reviewed the Vision Statement and goals with Park stakeholders to verify if these were still relevant for our effort.

### Vision and Goals

The existing Park Vision Statement is as follows:

"To nurture and enhance the cultural, recreational, and passive resources of the Park to meet the needs of the region and the surrounding community, while respecting its physical, cultural, and historical environment."

We learned that the community still supported the Vision Statement and the goals that accompany it. These goals are as follows, with some modification or clarification based on community comments.

### Goals

- Create pedestrian-oriented environments—we added "that are accessible to all."
- Increase free and open parkland. We interpret this goal to mean "increase Park access and public open space."
- Restore existing landscapes.
- Enhance mix of cultural, active, and passive recreation "opportunities."
- Create connection and linkages "between the Park mesas and the Park, the surrounding neighborhoods, and Downtown."



### **Community Outreach**

The planning effort has been structured around an extensive community/stakeholder outreach program. The intent of this effort was to solicit unbiased and diverse feedback and to collect ideas, issues, and concerns to better understand the overall needs of the Park.

Through our public involvement effort we hope to shape a dynamic community-driven vision to make things happen. Continued public involvement empowers the community and strengthens the vision so that it can be championed by public officials, City agencies, and Park advocates alike.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

Balboa Park is San Diego's most visible and beloved public amenity. Its renowned mixture of gardens, open space, historic architecture, recreational facilities, and world-class cultural institutions make this park one of the most visible and beloved public parks in the world.

With this diversity of uses and widespread popularity come many challenges and conflicts. Limited access points, geography, and operational needs that are often in opposition to other uses within the Park have made moving forward with previous Master Plan recommendations difficult. Since the 1960s, the parking supply within Balboa Park has increased by 20%–30%, yet the need for more is at the heart of much of the current stakeholders' conflict.

### **Park Geography**

The Park's geography, composed of mesas and canyons, creates wonderful opportunities for grand vistas and rugged hiking and jogging trails; it also has left the major activity areas of the Park unconnected (and, in some cases, inaccessible) and as a result under-utilized by the public.

### **Circulation Connectivity**

The circulation and connections network from the different Park activity areas is fragmented. For example, a person cannot move from the Central Mesa to the East Mesa without a circuitous drive; pedestrians walking to the Park from Downtown along 6th Avenue cannot get to the Palisades unless they head north to the Laurel Street bridge and then back down through the Park to their destination.

The Park's circulation system for all modes of movement needs to be improved and made accessible to all.

### **Reclaim Open Space**

Many areas of the Park have been damaged or cut off from the public's perception as safe and open for use. Reclaiming these areas needs to be an overall Park priority. Connecting these underutilized open spaces to the existing activity cores and Park circulation network will enhance the open space "Park" experience while also increasing the public's opportunity to enjoy Balboa Park's natural amenities. Two examples of areas in the park that need such improvement are the Arizona landfill and the southern tip of Inspiration Point.



## Activity Cores

Balboa Park has five major activity areas (cores) and several other key destination areas that draw people from throughout the city, the state, and the world.

The major activity cores are each unique and provide cultural, recreational, educational, and community service opportunities that are open to all. These areas include the Prado, the Palisades, Morley Field, Inspiration Point, and the Zoo.

The other key destination points tend to be single-use areas such as the golf course, the foot trails, picnic areas, Florida Canyon, Marston Point, and the off-leash dog parks, etc.

## Balancing Needs of All

These activity areas provide a dynamic mix of experience for all types of people; this mix should be strengthened. The needs of activity areas and the entities within them have to be balanced with the overall needs of the Park. No one entity should drive the Park's decision-making process, funding objectives, and planning.

## Historic Preservation

Preservation of Balboa Park's historic architecture and the Park's gardens and other relevant landscape amenities needs to be continued. Future enhancement of these elements should be a priority.

## Funding

There have been many studies, plans, and proposals for addressing capital needs in Balboa Park over the past 20 years; it appears that most of these plans have not been implemented because funding for large capital improvements has not materialized. Through our analysis of this body of reports, plans, and studies for Balboa Park improvements, we have determined that many of the issues have already been identified. In some cases the issues have viable solutions but have not yet found the right combination of political, community, and stakeholder support to allow them to move forward.

Funding will always be the most important ingredient for achieving success and moving forward with meaningful Park improvements. With the current financial pressures on the City of San Diego's General Fund, the Park and Recreation Department's primary funding source, new, more stable sources of capital need to be identified.

This issue needs to be explored on several levels and has more to do with policy than with planning and design.

## Policy

Since the Balboa Park Master Plan was last updated in 1989, several critical issues have been identified. Many of these were addressed in the Master Plan but have not been carried out for a number of reasons. There are many issues facing the San Diego Community relating to Balboa Park which will first need to be addressed as public policy changes before design solutions can be developed and implemented.

Examples of these issues are:

- funding mechanisms for capital—implementing improvements and ongoing operational and maintenance needs
- parking policy—paid vs. unpaid
- organizational policies—who is the Park managed by, and how?



### Introduction

The first public forum of the Balboa Park Parking, Circulation, and Land Use Study was held on the evening of April 3, 2003 at the Balboa Park Club Building. Over 140 people attended the forum, hosted by the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department and the Balboa Park Committee, to provide their input on the Vision for Balboa Park.

The Chair of the Balboa Park Committee, Dan Mazzella, opened the Forum, and Councilmember Toni Atkins, who represents Balboa Park and Council District 3 on San Diego City Council, provided additional project background. Ellen Oppenheim, Director of the Park and Recreation Department, provided the introduction of the planning team led by Jones & Jones/Civitas, Inc.

Mario Campos of Jones & Jones presented the planning team's initial impressions of the Park and their understanding of challenges and issues associated with the parking, circulation, and land use, and he presented a series of images of parks from around the world to illustrate ideas that Forum participants may draw from during the working session. This was followed by table exercises in which forum attendees brainstormed challenges and opportunities for future planning of Balboa Park, a summary of which follows.



### Synthesis

The participants of the first public forum of the Balboa Park: Parking, Circulation, and Land Use Study voiced several concerns and possible improvements to Balboa Park. The common goal is to transform Balboa Park into an inviting, easily accessible, community-friendly environment by recapturing and enhancing the area's natural landscape, parkland, cultural institutions, culture, and historical value.

### Parking

A common thread throughout the evening was the elimination or reduction of parking within the Park. The automobiles and numerous asphalt lots within the Park cover the Park's beauty. Instead, participants felt that most parking should be moved to the Park's perimeter and be free to all users. The general push was towards the elimination of expansive parking lots that consume Park space and to link the new or remaining lots with a cohesive transit system to solve the parking issues in and around Balboa Park.

### Selected Comments

- Keep parking free and subterranean (hide the lots)
- Parking dispersed/limited and provide light rail to link lots to park center
- Better access from freeways to parking areas
- Utilize Downtown parking spaces that are unused during weekend and use shuttle to bring Park visitors into Balboa Park
- Deal with City College parking issue
- Paid parking makes sense if it can offset capital and operational costs
- Develop employee parking management strategy



### Public Transportation

Participants felt that the Park has been overrun by vehicular traffic that threatens a pedestrian-friendly Park environment. Many suggested developing accessible, frequent, and useful public transportation.

#### Selected Comments

- Light rail/trolley system that links parking areas to park interior
- Improve/create trolley/shuttle system to link Park to Downtown and other surrounding areas
- Vehicular traffic only for Park maintenance and user set up vehicles

### Pedestrian-Friendly

Participants commented that the Park should be accessible to all community members and should not be hindered by constant vehicular traffic.

#### Selected Comments

- Create pedestrian bridges that link surrounding neighborhoods to Balboa Park
- Pedestrian bridges linking different parts of Park; bridges linking East and West
- Make Park more accessible to disabled and elderly (comply with disability laws)

### Zoo

Many forum participants expressed concerns about not allowing the San Diego Zoo to continue their project plans. They feel the San Diego Zoo's expansion plans should be slowed down until the Balboa Park Parking, Circulation, and Land Use Study was completed and a more thorough decision on how to enhance and better utilize the Park's resources is reached.

#### Selected Comments

- Zoo parking should be restructured in order to maintain or expand park space. One idea offered was to create an underground parking structure that would not claim any more valuable space above ground.
- Keep it a park, not a revenue machine
- Zoo's needs should be balanced with the needs of the entire Park





### Inspiration Point & Other Areas

#### *Inspiration Point & Naval Hospital*

Several participants suggested removing the Navy Hospital and returning the site to parkland. Others suggested that Inspiration Point could be more fully utilized. Some felt that Navy Hospital personnel should not be allowed to park at Inspiration Point.

#### **Selected Comments**

- Subterranean parking structure with useable park/landscaping on top
- Minimize physical and visual impacts of the Naval Hospital

#### *Landfill*

Many participants felt that the landfill site could be transformed into an active use Park area.

#### **Selected Comments**

- Implement the East Mesa Master Plan
- Transform into something useful, an open space that people can use

#### *Florida Canyon*

Florida Canyon divides the east and west sides of Balboa Park. Several groups suggested that Florida Drive be closed through the canyon and returned to parkland. Others said that the natural vegetation of the canyon should be maintained and restored.

#### **Selected Comments**

- Restore Florida Canyon to native state
- Close northern section of Florida Canyon to vehicular traffic as detailed in the master plan

### Park Entrances & Landscape

Participants made several suggestions about beautifying park entrances and improving the visitor experience by revamping the Park's landscape. Furthermore, Park guests should be greeted with formal, inviting entrances. Participants suggested that changes be made within the Park include the removal of asphalt (e.g., parking lots) and replacing it with green, lush, colorful terrain that can be used and enjoyed by visitors.





### Opening Remarks

#### Comments from Dan Mazella

- Public forum Discovery Session
- Balboa Park Committee: help host
- Jones & Jones, Civitas Inc., TDA, LJ Black, Milford Wayne Donaldson, H R & A

#### Comments from Councilmember Toni Atkins

- First in series of workshops regarding this topic: Common vision for a regional treasure
- One of the nation's premiere public parks
- Deep sense of responsibility to the Park, its visitors, its history
- \$975,000 grant for this vision plan
- Consider needs of entire Park, relationship with surrounding communities and Downtown
- Zoo also going through planning process—moving ahead with the understanding that if approved, they would not implement until this larger plan is completed. (No improvements on Park Boulevard yet.) The Jones & Jones study may amend the Zoo plans.
- Zoo: 3 yrs, \$3,000,000 process. Endorsed by Committee of City Council.
- Unaware the City would be awarded grant to study all Balboa Park at that point. Not fair to completely halt Zoo's movements since they are so far along in the process.

Tonight: Some of our decisions will reach into the future. Public involvement is critical.

#### Comments from Ellen Oppenheim (Park and Recreation Director)

- SD City has the 2nd largest municipal park and recreation program
- Recognize and register the Park's many strengths, weaknesses, and how to improve
- Extensive RFQ (request for qualifications): Jones & Jones and Civitas selected
- These firms have national recognition for creative problem solving and urban space, public participation

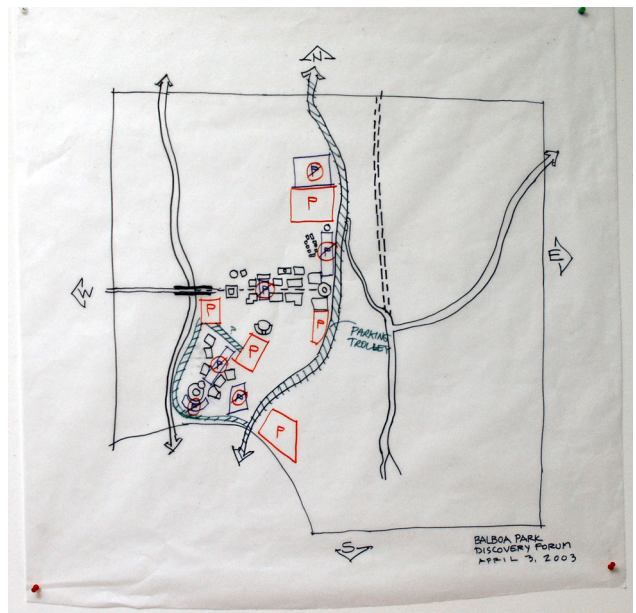
#### Comments from Mario Campos of Jones & Jones and Mark Johnson of Civitas

- January 2003: began to study Balboa Park
- Will hold four public forums and hundreds of interviews
- Unbiased, fact-finding, open to public issues, ideas, and concerns. Shaping a dynamic community-driven vision. Empower the community to validate vision, goals, and objectives. Strengthen the vision so it can be championed by public officials, agencies, and Park advocates.
- By July: findings, summary of process
- To be considered:
  - Collection of landscapes and buildings
  - Challenges:
    - Overuse
    - "Privatization" of public open space
    - Transportation infrastructure
    - Talk of clarity of circulation (usable but not accessible)
    - Fragmentation of space
    - Free and open public Park with cultural institutions: What is the dynamic?
      - 1,400 acres of land to be held in trust forever for public park only.
      - 1915 introduction of cultural buildings. Nolan Plan established vision of integrating landscape and the city with passive and active recreation
      - 1935 World Fair: merging of cultural institutions with Park
      - 1989 improvements: "To nurture and enhance the culture, recreation and passive resources of Park to meet needs of the region and surrounding community while respecting physical, cultural, and historical environment"



### Goals

- Restore landscapes
- Enhance mixture of cultural uses, active uses, and passive uses
- Create connections and linkages
- Pedestrian-oriented environment:
  - Las Ramblas (Barcelona); the Champs Élysées and the Tuileries gardens (Paris); Pioneer Square (Seattle); Plaza de la Constitution (Oaxaca)
- 500–600 acres of Park are heavily used. Rest left unused because not easily accessible.
- Increase parkland
  - Hyde Park (London); Alameda (Mexico); Grant Park (Chicago); Central Park (New York) (1/2 the size of Balboa Park!); Commons Park (Denver); Cedar Lake Park and Trail (Minneapolis)
- Restore: Mercer Slough (Seattle area); Jardin des Plantes (Paris)
- Active/Passive: Vondel Park (Amsterdam); Sand Point connections (Seattle); the Champs Élysées, the Tuileries gardens, and the Promenade Plantée (Paris)







### Table 6

- Green area along Park
- Parking structure to get traffic as it comes in on Park Blvd (Zoo)
- Doesn't address issue of congestion: higher density building around, more traffic
- More open and green space
- Center of Park = Zoo; brings more vehicular congestion
- Eliminate short trips (vehicular) with design
  - Concentrate on accommodating cars that come from far: where accessing from?

### Table 7

- Native vegetation contained to Florida Canyon: Should it be left untouched?
- Better pedestrian access to Florida Canyon

### Table 8

- Parking on perimeter
- Need transit every 5 min (vehement comment)
- Create piazzas, plazas
- Underground parking in downtown empty on weekends: have public park and shuttle trolley
- Get people to think differently
- Consider safety of after-hour parking and public transit
- Designed for policemen to cruise by: No high bushes, walls, garden rooms because of this

### Table 9

- Satellite parking outside Park: larger regional context—no tourist places around this area have enough parking on their own. Need holistic view to regional parking.
- No parking in center of Park
- No overflow parking on landfill
  - Develop landfill for open recreation
- Close part of Florida Drive for park
- No \$, no political will (vehement comment)
  - People aren't voting on this. Need political will.

### Table 10

- People congregate in main area because no other place to congregate
- Park is a place to gather, talk—we lack gathering spaces
  - Talk as a community—experience diversity
- Will it always be cut through by road?
- Can separate pedestrian and car traffic
- If Park Boulevard a thoroughfare, will dump people into residential areas

### Table 11

- Landfill: now a nursery for city
- Playgrounds, lawns, lawn bowling, ball field
- Mitigate the methane from landfill. Extract.
- More frequent transits
- Laurel Street bridge pedestrian only. Maybe trolley too.
- Connect access to all areas
- Stop Zoo until plan done

### Table 12

- People trapped downtown

### Table 13

- Charge to park? How are some people allowed to use it for free and not others?—(Zoo issue)
- Against paid parking!



# Table Presentations

## Table 1

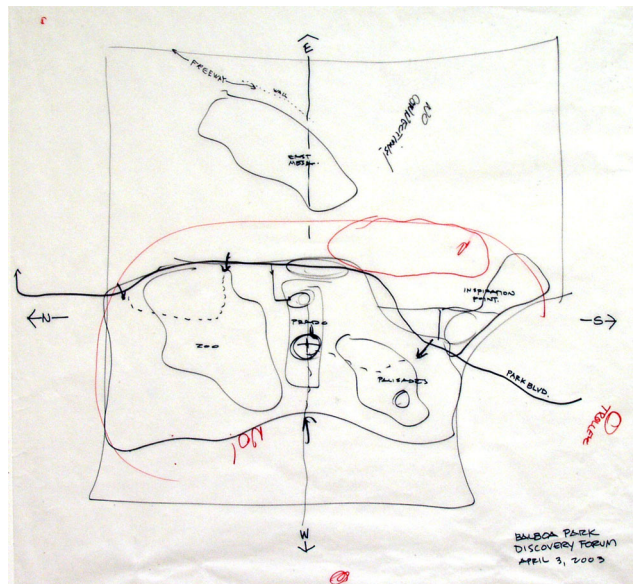
- Access: maintain to institutions for user set up. Becoming pay-to-play park. Need more free access.
- Cultural institutions: disperse to avoid bottleneck
- Freeway 163: doesn't function properly. Doesn't serve Park. Cuts it off.
  - Create underground road and put parking above
- Reclaim multipurpose areas with frequent, reliable, safe transportation.

## Table 2

- Parking: more and finding what is there
  - Concentrate parking in certain areas
  - Parking close to destinations (at least some)
  - Naval hospital use Inspiration Point parking: need to contain hospital parking to their own lot
- Consider pedestrian needs
  - Pedestrian links between destinations
  - Better pedestrian access to Florida Canyon
- Reduce cars in central mesa. Remove cars from Prado, Laurel Street bridge
- Connections in and around area
  - Improve connections to Downtown
  - Provide connection to Prado from East
- Create inviting entries to park: like Laurel Street
- Relocate City maintenance uses out of Park
- Replace landfill
- Utilize canyons. Some are no-building zones, but should they be?

## Table 3

- Parking, access, expanding footprint/land (close some roads—Prado?)
  - Parking structures with landscape
  - Bridges over freeway with parks-over
- Link East and West, especially for pedestrians
- Strengthen/create links to neighborhood parks (fingers into neighborhoods)
- Improve non-auto access: extend trolley
  - People movers
- Better directional signage
- Landscape landfill
- Keep 9-hole course, turn into 18-hole and eliminate current 18-hole





### Table 4

- Ditto to previous groups
- Remove asphalt from center of Park:  
reduces automobile traffic
- Improve parking at Inspiration Point; Zoo.  
Consider close parking???

### Table 5

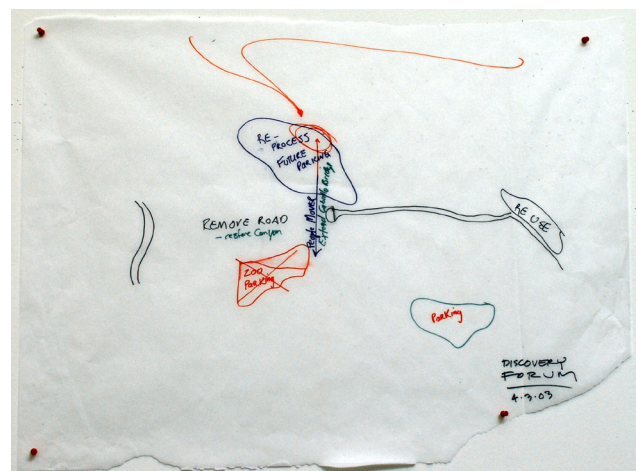
- Eradicate Navy hospital  
(several in audience clapped)
- Florida Canyon restored: 1994 implemented
- Improve landfill: get people into that area
- Deal with City College parking problem

### Table 6

- Revive and return historic streetcar: provide less parking
- Return plazas and fountains of original plan (original pavilion and museums)
- Remove large parking areas
- Remove City maintenance yard
- Morley Field not considered as part of Park
- Close Florida Canyon Road
- Move nursery area
- Inspiration Point is underutilized: use for parking
- Connect Canyon fingers
- Do not allow private uses to expand into open space
- Maintain current footprint
- Growth: expand in satellites; same with parking
- Recognize original landscape plans
- Move Navy Hospital and Jr. High, open golf course

### Table 7

- Landfill: open, make public
- Remove golf course
- Return Florida Canyon to native state
- No institution grows beyond present footprint
- Ask Zoo to stop their planning process until this plan is done (more clapping)
- Reclaim Plaza de Panama
- No parking in Park





**Table 8**

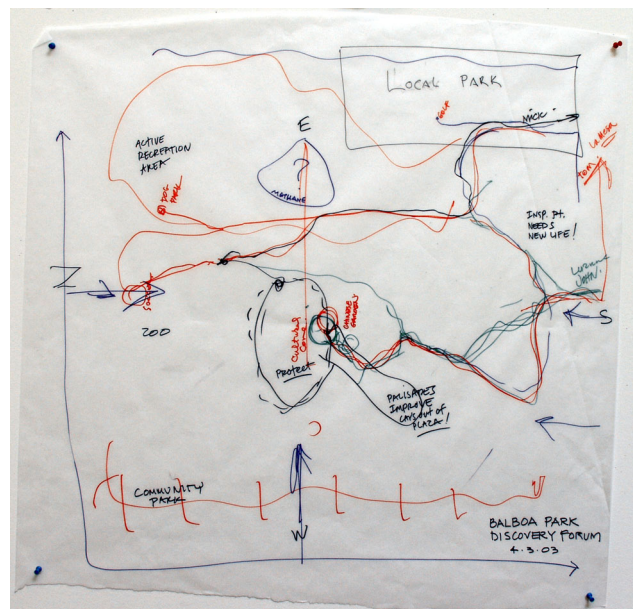
- Parking free and subterranean
- Parking dispersed/limited; provide light rail
- Parking: remove from front of Art Museum
- Better access from freeways to parking areas
- Better accessible shuttle with more stops: friendly
- Maintain road through, by improve intersection in front of Timkin Gallery
- Restore historic plantings (more clapping)
- New architecture disjointed: use guidelines
- Losing open space to buildings
- Community College using Park parking
- Zoo: make free 1 day/month
- End privatization (golf, Boy Scouts)
- Pedestrian access from East to West
- Remove maintenance yard
- More pretty bridges: pedestrian access across park
- More public meeting space

**Table 9**

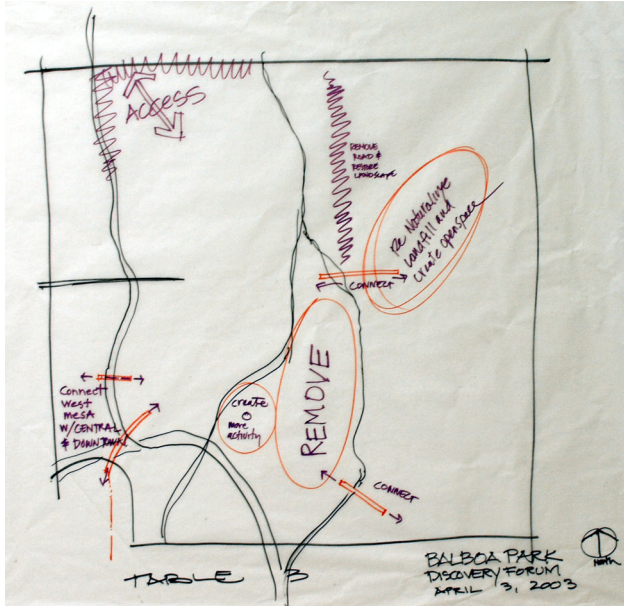
- Improve elderly access
- Parking down-played: fewer cars in park, just outside
- More open and free parking: don't charge for areas
- Maintain delivery, maintenance access
- Close Florida Canyon to traffic
- Zoo should pay rent
- No Zoo expansion! Cultural pieces need to stay
- Stop Zoo plans until completed
- Playgrounds and other places for children to use
- Close Laurel Bridge: Connect with Downtown, Mission Bay for parking
- Incorporate Kate Sessions' vision
- Navy hospital: overflow parking, use City College parking on weekends

**Table 10**

- Public transportation, open space, less commercial, less parking within Park, accommodate disabled
  - No lots within Park
  - Walking dogs important: 24-hour access
- Move Navy hospital
- Park link over Highway 5
- Close 163 and replace lake
- Link to East Mesa
- Turn Inspiration Point into parkland? Park with underground parking?
- Florida Canyon restored
- No extension to lease holders; no more commercial use of Park
- Zoo expand @ Wild Animal Park: create underground parking at current Zoo parking site
- Keep golf course: affordable, wildlife
- Need more park space in mid city
- Five-story height restriction on 4th-6th (because reduces parking) and require adequate parking for new development
- Bike path through and reduce closures for special events









## Community Outreach

Since beginning this project in January 2003, our Team has reached out to a wide array of community stakeholders regarding Balboa Park and its future. This effort was intended to learn about the Park as a singular place and to hear first-hand the issues, challenges, and opportunities as our planning process goes forward.

To date, we have held over 500 interviews and meetings with representatives of the San Diego city government, public agencies, neighborhood groups, cultural institutions, transportation and utility agencies, recreation and special event coordinators, Park enthusiasts, and a wide array of individual stakeholders. We have also had five stakeholder workshops and the first of our four planned public forums, in addition to receiving input from individuals via telephone calls, letters, and emails. All of the input we have received has been extremely helpful for our efforts to plan recommendations for Balboa Park.

This process has also taught us that Balboa Park is well-loved by a broad cross-section of people, all of whom have different areas of interest and issues relating to the Park's future.



## Earth Day

On April 27th, 2003, Jones & Jones set up a booth in Balboa Park at San Diego's Earth Fair. We asked a number of the 60,000 attendees to TELL US ABOUT YOUR PARK. We encouraged people to talk about what they love about Balboa Park and what they felt could be improved. Finally, we asked people to share their visions of what the Park should be in the future and how circulation and land use could contribute to these visions.



Here are some of the responses:

- Get the golf out.
- Make it as green as possible. No parking lots. Encourage more transit like other cities.
- We need a trolley system throughout the city so that the whole family can go to the Park.
- I come here for the cultural institutions but enjoy the diversity of uses. I can just show up and something is happening.
- Parking for special events is a challenge. Natural areas have homeless camping there.
- Improve access for rollerblades, bikes, and strollers. Connect the mesas.
- Create better access to the East Mesa.
- No more parking, or at least underground parking.
- Access throughout Park for families.
- Extend uses to evening hours with cafés and other venues beyond the museums.
- The Prado is too expensive for casual visits.
- Connect the Central Mesa to the East Mesa.
- I love the diversity of recreation choices.
- Get rid of the naval hospital. The park isn't the safest place for the navy.
- Grape Street dog park needs toilet improvements.
- Get rid of the parking lots.
- Ditto the naval hospital.
- More native landscapes.
- More play areas for adults—big people swings and climbing.
- The Central Mesa is overused. Open up the landfill and East Mesa.
- Put parking underground.
- More night uses—restaurants and events.
- Get rid of golf.
- I play golf, but definitely too much golf course for the amount of the park it consumes.



- I want more access to Florida Canyon and other parts of the park.
- Need natural habitat on top of the landfill and maintenance areas.
- Bury the Zoo parking like at the Cox Arena at SDSU.
- There should be free and open park on top of Zoo parking.
- I would be willing to pay for parking if I knew that the money was going to improve the Park.
- Shut Pershing not Florida Drive.
- Connect the mesas by improving the landfill and golf courses.
- No more encroachment by institutions. The structures should foster new institutions. Yes to a cultural incubator.
- Don't do anything to the Park!
- The Organ Pavillion is too small. How about more golf on the landfill?
- More civic parkland in Florida Canyon.
- Get rid of the naval hospital.
- Don't give any more Park to the Zoo.
- Put the dog park on the landfill and give Grape Street back to the neighborhoods, especially underserved.
- There is a constant conflict between dogs and recreation.
- The dog park at Nate's Point should be fenced.
- Renovate the bathrooms at Grape Street to ADA standards.
- More natural areas, not irrigated, to support local native wildlife.
- I love the Park! I want more trees, green, and water, not buildings and landfill.
- I am afraid of the homeless in the canyon.
- Connect from Aerospace Museum to West Mesa.
- Less golf course!
- Make the Park pedestrian friendly, even on the east side of the Park.
- South Park neighborhood has large elderly population. It is difficult for them to use some streets in the Park because there are no sidewalks or crosswalks.
- Do something like a civic park on the landfill. The whole East Mesa should be public.
- Block off Florida Drive like the Master Plan suggests.
- Move nursery to maintenance area. Open nursery space for park.
- Golf out. Park in.
- Keep the Zoo in their current footprint. I love the Zoo, but we have enough here.
- The Park needs a conservancy to look after it.
- Tear down the new parts of the naval hospital. The old buildings can be reused.
- Keep the golf course restaurant affordable to all, not just for rich people.
- Take the tennis courts back for the public. Shouldn't have these types of private uses.
- Why are there so many tennis courts, but no outdoor basketball courts?
- Don't build more in the canyons.
- Convert the landfill to native habitats.
- I enjoy walking in the native parts of canyon.
- If there were a lot more public open space, I could accept a little more cultural institutions.





- I want more food and bathrooms for the public.
- More natural history interpretation.
- Keep all of it for all the people.
- Leave homeless people alone.
- I want less privatization of the Park.
- There should be more bridges connecting parts of the Park.
- It is difficult to cross Florida Drive.
- There should be more access by public transportation.
- And more pedestrian access within the Park.
- More native habitat for wildlife throughout the Park.
- Reserve the Park in a natural state.
- No parking in the heart of the Park. Park at the perimeter.
- Less single uses. More diversity of uses. Multilayered.
- City and regional transportation systems need to cooperate on transit options.
- Quit giving away the Park.
- Preserve the buildings because they are historic resources.
- Give 163 a parkway feel.
- More greenspace at Inspiration Point.
- The high school should be a beautiful link to Downtown.
- Put Zoo parking underground or a garage at Inspiration Point and the maintenance facilities.
- Parking at the perimeter, not the center.
- Extend and improve bike paths and shuttle buses.
- Need better signage on highways. Improve the gateways into the park on Park Boulevard.
- I love to walk around everywhere in the Park.
- Connect the Park to other regional amenities and open spaces—waterfront!
- Better transit links.
- Find ways to open up the large fenced areas—golf, Scouts, schools, etc.
- I have watched the natural environment of Balboa Park be ruined over the years. The Park and the City are losing their character. Please add to the open space. Take back the privatized areas.
- Integrate alternative transit and internal trolley link.
- Improve pedestrian access.
- International villages have limited uses. They are not open on Sundays. Don't let them grow.
- Connect the East Mesa with bridges over roads and canyons.
- We love the nature and the culture, but balance the uses.
- Preserve and enhance the canyons and streams.







## Summary of Visitor Transportation Survey

To gather information on current visitor travel patterns, we interviewed visitors about their trip to the Park. Interviews were conducted on the Central Mesa over 2.5 days, from Thursday, April 24, to Saturday, April 26, 2003. A total of 828 interviews were completed.

The interviews began at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday and finished at 4:30 p.m., while those on Friday and Saturday were done between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. These times were selected to cover the period of greatest activity and attendance. For this reason, evening interviews were not conducted. The questions are listed on the sample survey form on page 23.

### Where were visitors interviewed?

Interview locations included:

- Aerospace Museum
- Automotive Museum
- Fleet Science Center
- Japanese Friendship Garden
- Museum of Man
- Organ Pavilion
- Pepper Grove
- Prado (between the Museum of Man and the fountain)
- Zoo

The geographic distribution of responses is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Number of Interviews by General Location**

Prado	305	36.8%
Zoo	184	22.2%
Organ Pavilion	138	16.7%
Palisades	114	13.8%
Pepper Grove	80	9.7%
Other	7	0.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### How did visitors arrive at the Park?

Table 2 shows the modes of travel used on each day that interviews occurred.

**Table 2. Percent of Visitor by Mode of Travel**

Mode	Thursday 24-Apr-03	Friday 25-Apr-03	Saturday 26-Apr-03
Auto	81.9%	81.7%	78.6%
Transit	3.8%	1.7%	6.7%
Tour Bus	2.1%	6.3%	6.0%
Walk/Bike	4.2%	6.3%	3.1%
Dropped Off	5.5%	0.6%	3.8%
Other	2.5%	3.4%	1.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Consistently, from 82% to 85% of visitors arrive by car, either driving or being dropped off. Over the three survey days, just less than 5% of visitors used transit to get to the Park.

### What was their route of arrival?

Table 3 provides responses to as to which street people used to enter the Park. People had different ideas about where the Park’s boundaries actually lie; for example, some people indicated President’s Way as their point of entry, when in fact it was Park Boulevard.

**Table 3. Visitors' Route of Arrival**

Street	Thursday 24-Apr-03	Friday 25-Apr-03	Saturday 26-Apr-03
Park Blvd	71%	72%	84%
Laurel St/El Prado	25%	27%	15%
Upas St/Pershing Dr	3%	2%	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### When people drove, how many people were in each vehicle?

Table 4 lists the average car occupancy for visitors to the Central Mesa.

**Table 4. Average Vehicle Occupancy – Visitors**

Persons per Vehicle	Thursday 24-Apr-03	Friday 25-Apr-03	Saturday 26-Apr-03
	3.05	3.14	3.27



*Where did they come from?*

Table 5 shows visitors’ places of residence, based on their residential zip codes. The wide range of residential locations reflects the strong attraction Balboa Park has for residents from outside of the City of San Diego.

**Table 5. Visitors’ Place of Residence**

Place of Residence	Number of Responses	Percent
City of San Diego	239	30.8%
San Diego Metro Area	187	24.1%
Other California	165	21.3%
Out of State	185	23.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>100%</b>

*How long did visitors stay?*

Visitors were asked the time they arrived at the Park and their expected time of departure. Table 6 shows the resulting average length of stay for visitors in Balboa Park.

**Table 6. Average Length of Stay**

	Thursday 24-Apr-03	Friday 25-Apr-03	Saturday 26-Apr-03
Hours of Stay	3:12	4:06	3:31

Given that most attractions are open only 8 or 9 hours, generally between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., most visitors stay through nearly half of the hours of operation. These are long durations of stay compared to many other individual cultural and recreational uses.

*How many destinations did visitors visit?*

Visitors reported a wide variety of sites visited. Table 7 shows the average number of destinations visitors visited on their trip to Balboa Park.

**Table 7. Average Number of Sites Visited while in Balboa Park**

	Thursday 24-Apr-03	Friday 25-Apr-03	Saturday 26-Apr-03
Number of Sites	2.5	2.4	2.5

The number of sites visited underscores the benefit of grouping many activities together in Balboa Park—visitors can stay longer and do more while parking once than they could were these destinations located separately. However, due to the long stays, parking does not turn over very frequently.

*Which destinations did visitors visit?*

Visitors indicated that they visited or would visit destinations as listed in Table 8.

**Table 8. Destinations**

Museum	652	31.7%
Garden	446	21.7%
Walk/Recreation	278	13.5%
Other	266	12.9%
Zoo	224	10.9%
Eat	139	6.8%
Picnic	50	2.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,055</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Where did visitors park?*

Over the three days of interviews, visitors reported parking in the locations listed in Table 9.

**Table 9. Parking Locations Used**

Parking Location	% of Visitors
Zoo	24.4%
Organ Pavilion	17.9%
Science Center	9.9%
Pepper Grove	8.7%
On-Street	7.6%
Pan American Plaza	7.3%
Natural History Museum	6.8%
Alcazar Garden	5.9%
Inspiration Point	5.3%
Plaza de Panama	2.9%
Spanish Village	2.3%
House of Hospitality	1.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Visitors showed a distinct preference for parking in locations close to their destinations, such as the Zoo lot and the Organ Pavilion lot. Also noteworthy is the use of on-street parking, which was the 5th most used location by the respondents.



# Sample of Visitor Transportation Survey

## Balboa Park Visitor Interviews

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_ am or pm Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduce yourself and describe the purpose of the questions (to improve access and parking).

1. When did you arrive in the park today? \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_ am or pm
2. How did you get to the park today?
  - a. Drove
    - i. Including you, how many people were in your car? \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Where did you park? (Use map to identify location) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Walked/Biked
  - c. Rode the City bus
    - i. Which route? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Tour bus
  - e. Dropped off
  - f. Other? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What street did you use to enter the park? (Use map to identify street.) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which places will you visit or have you visited today? (list them all)
  - a. Museums
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Aerospace Museum</li> <li>ii. American Indian Culture Center &amp; Museum</li> <li>iii. Centro Cultural de la Raza</li> <li>iv. Fleet Science Center</li> <li>v. Hall of Champions</li> <li>vi. Historical Society</li> <li>vii. Mingei International Museum</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>viii. Model Railroad Museum</li> <li>ix. Museum of Art</li> <li>x. Museum of Man</li> <li>xi. Museum of Photographic Arts</li> <li>xii. Natural History Museum</li> <li>xiii. Timken Art Museum</li> <li>xiv. Veterans Memorial &amp; Museum</li> </ol>
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  - b. Restaurants
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Albert’s Restaurant</li> <li>ii. Café in the Park</li> <li>iii. Galileo Café</li> <li>iv. Lady Carolyn’s Pub</li> <li>v. The Prado</li> <li>vi. Snack cart along El Prado</li> <li>vii. Snack cart along Spreckles Organ Pavilion</li> <li>viii. Time Out Café</li> <li>ix. Village Grill</li> </ol>	<p>(near Gorilla Tropics) (in the Casa de Balboa) (in the Science Center) (in the Globe Theater) (in the House of Hospitality)</p> <p>(in the Hall of Champions Sports Museum) (at Village Place &amp; Old Globe Way)</p>
--	---
  - c. Zoo
  - d. Gardens
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Alcazar Garden</li> <li>ii. Desert Garden</li> <li>iii. Old Cactus Garden</li> <li>iv. Japanese Friendship Garden</li> <li>v. Marston House Garden</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vi. Palm Canyon</li> <li>vii. Inez Grant Parker Memorial Rose Garden</li> <li>viii. Zoro Garden</li> <li>ix. Botanical Building</li> <li>x. San Diego Zoo Botanical Collection</li> </ol>
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  - e. Spanish Village
  - f. Picnic area
  - g. Organ Pavilion
  - h. Playfields
  - i. Other? \_\_\_\_\_
5. When do you plan to leave the park today? \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_ am or pm
6. What is you home ZIP-code? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!!



### Stakeholder Workshop #1 Minutes

**San Diego Zoological Society—June 3, 2003**

#### **ATTENDEES**

Donna Damson, San Diego Zoo  
Gail Macleod, San Diego Zoo  
David Rice, San Diego Zoo  
Mark Marney, San Diego Park and Recreation  
Charlie Daniels, San Diego Park and Recreation  
Mario Campos, Jones & Jones  
Kevin Carl, Jones & Jones  
Tom Hester, Civitas  
Rhonda Bell, Civitas

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Overview: Mario Campos presented the Jones & Jones/ Civitas PowerPoint presentation including the team planning analysis, their assessment of Park-related issues, and several rough scenarios of how these issues may be approached in the future.

Mario explained to the group that the team's intent was not to show plan options at this point, but rather a series of tools that address each of the core layers of Park need; i.e., parking, circulation, access, land use, and open space.

After the overview the group engaged in open discussion over the presentation content. The key points were as follows:

1. Concerns were expressed that the scenarios didn't include a clear recognition of the Zoo's own proposal now in consideration of Draft Approval before the City Council.
2. The vehicular capacity of Zoo Drive limits the proposed removal of the northern stretch of Florida Drive per the 1989 Balboa Park Master Plan unless it is increased to four lanes.
3. All agree the access and connections improvements are needed between the three park mesas in order to make the Balboa Park circulation system work.
4. Access to and through the Park will require regional, City, and in-park infrastructure improvements in order to be effective.
5. Operations and maintenance costs for an in-park circulator tram must be part of the recommendations.
6. Operations and maintenance costs need to be part of any structured parking recommendations.
7. J&J/Civitas plan recommendations need to consider the needs of both the Park and the Zoo.
8. Zoo staff gave the planning team several constructive comments about their presentation and cautioned the group in a few potential political pitfalls associated with the description language.
9. The vehicular access data provided by TDA indicated the percentage of vehicles entering the Park from the main access points. This assessment differs slightly from the Zoo's data. This is mainly due to the fact that TDA's work focused on the entire Park, whereas the Zoo looked at traffic heading to their facility only.
10. Wayfinding is still considered inadequate throughout the Park.

**END OF SESSION**



### Stakeholder Workshop #2 Minutes

**Center City Development Corporation—June 3, 2003**

#### ATTENDEES

Miriam Kirshner, MTDB  
Gary Smith, San Diego Downtown Residents Group  
Joyce Summer, Centre City Advisory Committee (Chair)  
Walter Rask, Centre City Advisory Committee  
Joan Isaacson, Dyett & Bhatia  
Rob Quinley, Rob Quinley  
Steve Mudler, Downtown Partnership  
Kevin Casey, Downtown Partnership  
Mario Campos, Jones & Jones  
Kevin Carl, Jones & Jones  
Tom Hester, Civitas  
Rhonda Bell, Civitas  
Charlie Daniels, San Diego Park & Recreation

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

Overview: Mario Campos presented the Jones & Jones/Civitas PowerPoint presentation including the team planning analysis, their assessment of Park-related issues, and several rough scenarios of how these issues may be approached in the future.

Mario explained to the group that the team's intent was not to show plan options at this point, but rather a series of tools that address each of the core layers of Park need; i.e., parking, circulation, access, land use, and open space.

After the overview the group engaged in open discussion over the presentation content. The key points were as follows:

1. Consider edge conditions around Balboa Park. Identify and develop ways to penetrate interior as much as possible to increase access and circulation.
2. Concentrate efforts on areas where other initiatives outside the Park can interface. Leveraging the improvements as much as possible; i.e., CCDC's Lid Over I-5 idea at 8th Avenue through 12th Avenue.
  - Develop new connections from Marsden Point to the Palisades Point.
  - Look at northwest corner of the Park; find a way to link it to Central Mesa.
  - Other opportunities are developing around the East Mesa and the Golden Hills Park; look for way to improve on them to develop links.
3. Safety continues to be a concern throughout Balboa Park. This is mostly more perception than reality. Park Rangers have reported that there has been very little violent crime in the Park in the last five years.
4. Wayfinding improvements and gateways on Park Boulevard are needed.
5. Balance the future of the park and those of infrastructure; "the needs of Balboa Park have to drive the infrastructure investment, not the other way around."
6. East Mesa/Florida Canyon is underutilized and disconnected from the rest of the Park; the area offers the best opportunity for future open space enhancements.
7. Look for ways to tie circulation/access improvements to the BRT, Bay to Park link, and the Cedar Street Corridor projects.
8. Downtown needs parking. Inspiration Point has been identified as possible reservoir for new structure to service BRT transit.
9. The group encouraged the planners to pursue the in-park circulator strategy; expand to all three mesas.
10. With the current new development and proposed future growth, Balboa park needs to serve downtown residents as well as provide support for local, regional and tourist based needs.
11. Concerns about the Park being used as a Park & Ride for downtown were expressed.
12. Comments were made about the team's overall vision—it is not yet clear what that vision is.

**END OF SESSION**



### Stakeholder Workshop #3 Minutes

**Balboa Park Cultural Partnership—June 4, 2003**

#### ATTENDEES

Shirley Phillips, San Diego Museum of Man  
Nancy Rodriguez, Centro Cultural de la Raza  
John Rotsart, San Diego Model Railroad Museum  
Jolene Mayer Shumilak, American Indian Culture Center & Museum  
John Peterson, Timken Museum of Art  
Will Neblett, San Diego Junior Theatre  
Bruce Bleakley, San Diego Aerospace Museum  
David Rice, Architect, San Diego Zoo  
James M. Hall  
John Wadas, San Diego Historical Society  
Robert F. Finch  
Lou Spisto, The Old Globe  
David Lang, Balboa Park Cultural Partnership  
David Kinney, House of Hospitality  
Alan Kidd, Hall of Champions  
Timothy Field, House of Charm  
Charlie Daniels, San Diego Park and Recreation  
Arthur Dillman, MOPA  
Heath Fox, SDMA  
Michael Hager, SDNHM  
Jeffrey Kirsch, RHFSC  
Ruben Seja, World Beat Center  
Tom Splitgerber, Veterans Museum and Memorial Center  
Mario Campos, Jones & Jones  
Kevin Carl, Jones & Jones  
Tom Hester, Civitas  
Rhonda Bell, Civitas  
Ross Tilghman, TDA  
David Marshall, M W Donaldson

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### A. Overview

Mario Campos presented the Jones & Jones/Civitas PowerPoint presentation including the team planning analysis, their assessment of Park-related issues, and several rough scenarios of how these issues may be approached in the future.

Mario explained to the group that the team's intent was not to show plan options at this point, but rather a series of tools that address each of the core layers of Park need; i.e., parking, circulation, access, land use, and open space.

After the overview the group engaged in open discussion over the presentation content. The key points were as follows:

1. All in the group recognized that Balboa Park is unique because of its rich mix of cultural institution and open space.
2. Tom presented an overview of Park development and the issues associated with the future pressures to build in the Central Mesa areas.
3. San Diego population is expected to grow rapidly over the next 20 to 50 years, increasing the need for healthy cultural institutions and open and accessible park land.
4. Several points were made regarding the presentation's use of language. Members of the Cultural Partnership cautioned the planning team that the institutions should be referred to as having operating agreements, not leaseholds.
5. Balboa Park's cultural institutions (excluding the Zoo) attract 25% of the Park visitors annually (the Zoo attracts 50%; other Park areas attract 25%).
6. 98% of the Park revenues are derived by the cultural institutions.
7. The total area covered by the cultural institutions in the Central Mesa (excluding the Zoo) accounts for less than 16% of the Park.



## IV. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS SUMMARY 27

8. Land Use: the City of San Diego needs to look at the Cultural Partnership data and define what is the best use for the land at Balboa Park; 16% of land attracts 25% of Park visitors.
9. San Diego Community values the relationship between the cultural institutions and the Park.
10. For the most part, cultural institutions have remained within their footprints over the last 20 years, while spending millions of dollars on expanding programs, physical improvements and advancing their cultural/artistic mission.
11. Access: Eastern Mesa is cut off from the Park; future improvements may take pressure off Central Mesa.
12. Understand issues associated with downtown development pressures. The transit plan (BRT) may cause the Park more harm than good if a comprehensive parking management strategy is not implemented with it.
13. Staff Parking:
  - It is estimated that the cultural institutions at Balboa Park employ over 1,300 and have 6,000 docents and volunteers.
  - It is also estimated that Park and institutional staff occupy more than 1/3 of the available parking in the Central Mesa.
14. It is important to create plan recommendations to support the existing cultural uses.
15. One participant mentioned a previously proposed overhead tram that could serve as a link to the different mesas as well as around the Central Mesa.
16. The group discussed the Bay to Park link and criticized the fact that it is really a one way corridor from Balboa Park to the Bay. Consider recommending two-way traffic flow through this corridor.
17. Consider improving Park Boulevard to be more parkway like. Create a new gateway at either entry point.
18. Several suggestions came from the participants to link downtown destinations to the Park. Destinations include:
  - Convention Center
  - New library
  - Cruise ship terminal
  - Downtown core
  - Cedar Street corridor to County Building
19. Consider the visual quality of Park links; develop:
  - Visual corridors, green streets, and interpretive trails
  - Integrate new public art, water features, and wayfinding elements
20. Concerns about the Naval Hospital were expressed:
  - It's a city unto itself, generating traffic and large parking needs that spill into the Park (Inspiration Point).
  - Serves as a barrier between the Palisades/ Inspiration Point and the south portion of East Mesa.
  - Brings traffic to the area.
21. Committee members discussed the need for access and parking for evening theater and restaurant goers. Many visitors come from out of town and transit will not effectively serve their needs.
22. Land Use Issues:
  - Mario Campos discussed the "Use It or Lose It" approach—if areas in the Park are not used as "Park," they fall prey to other non-park uses often incompatible with the rest of the Park.
23. CCDC Downtown Community Plan Update—It was recommended that the Jones & Jones/Civitas team review this document and find ways to link to its initiatives where possible.



### 24. Parking Issues:

- Paid vs. non-paid parking is a contentious issue
- Need for park-wide parking management strategy (visitors, staff, service)
- Possible impacts by BRT users—using Park as downtown Park & Ride lot.
- Pay for service issues—are visitors willing to pay for convenience, access, safety?

### 25. Special Events in the Park:

- Balboa Park hosts numerous special events on a year-round basis. These events, festivals, etc., have impacts on cultural institutions and on overall parking, access, and circulation.

## B. Transit

One member stated that Balboa Park cannot be responsible for teaching Southern California to change their driving habits. Transit options need to be both regional and city-wide in order to be effective in reducing auto-based traffic to the Park.

1. Service and delivery access must be maintained and enhanced to better serve the cultural institutions.
2. How the plan packages its recommendations will be critical to the future success of the J&J/Civitas team.
3. Plan must emphasize transit, improved access, circulation, and parking.
4. Create meaningful links to East and West mesas.
5. East Mesa is the best location for future Park improvements.
6. Drop off and pick up areas in the activity cores are vital for the cultural and educational institutions.
7. Review and enhance areas behind the main Park Building. Park land in these areas are under-utilized.
8. Concerns about park circulation—existing tram does not serve the Zoo and northeast portion of the Park.

9. Special events impact the Park and its institutions by closing off access.
10. Restaurant deliveries are sporadic and impact other uses in that proximity—a joint good neighbor agreement is needed.
11. Improve links between parking reservoirs and activity centers.
12. Improve overall pedestrian flow throughout the Park; link West, Central, and East Mesa together and with downtown.
13. Wayfinding and signage needs to be improved.
14. Create recognizable gateways on north and south ends of Park Boulevard.
15. Bridge closure has extreme impact on smaller cultural institutions.
16. Staff parking solutions need timely and safe solutions to be viable.
17. Weekend sports activities lock up parking on West Mesa
  - Local businesses and residents also use the West Mesa as their own parking lot
18. Parking solutions need to be multi-faceted:
  - Staff Parking
  - Visitor Parking
  - Service and delivery access
  - Disabled access
  - Non-park user

## C. Funding Issues

1. Consider use of Transient Occupancy Tax (hotel tax) for dedicated Park improvements.
2. Engage politicians in finding funding for plan implementation.

**END OF SESSION**



### Stakeholder Workshop #4 Minutes

Greater Golden Hill Planning Committee,  
Greater North Park Planning Group, and  
Uptown Community Planning Group—June 4, 2003

#### ATTENDEES

Lara Evans  
Beverly Davis  
Bill Barnard  
Mike Singleton  
Doug Scott  
Ben Baltic  
Paul Broadway  
Mary Wendorf  
Laura and Don Starr  
Kitty Callen  
Alex Sachs  
Terry Barker  
Marilee Kapsa  
Jay Hyde  
Neil Fonrum  
Warren Simon  
Richard Kurylo  
Roger Lewis  
Davis Sobo  
David Hamilton  
Charlie Daniels, San Diego Park and Recreation  
Mario Campos, Jones & Jones  
Kevin Carl, Jones & Jones  
Tom Hester, Civitas  
Rhonda Bell, Civitas  
Ross Tilghman, TDA  
David Marshall, M W Donaldson

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

Overview: Mario Campos presented the Jones & Jones/ Civitas PowerPoint presentation including the team planning analysis, their assessment of Park-related issues, and several rough scenarios of how these issues may be approached in the future.

Mario explained to the group that the team's intent was not to show plan options at this point, but rather a series of tools that address each of the core layers of Park need; i.e., parking, circulation, access, land use, and open space.

After the overview the group engaged in open discussion over the presentation content. The key points were as follows:

1. Alex Sachs from Uptown Planners stated that he was not supportive of the proposed intensification of cultural uses in the Park; he is in favor of diversity of use.
2. The represented communities expressed concerns about overall Park access and impacts from traffic.
3. Comments related to the development of a parking structure emphasized concerns that the users will fill the parking if we build it and the problem will still exist. They challenged the planning team to look 50 years out to identify recommendations that balance transit and infrastructure solutions with the short term needs.
4. Mario Campos stated that the parking capacity should be linked to the capacity of the main roadway capacity.
5. Challenges include connecting the Light Rail System to the Park?
6. Linking the three mesas together with pedestrian circulation network.
7. Build on existing Park tram to improve Park access and circulation.



## IV. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS SUMMARY 30

8. Look at other cities' use of transit to serve large cultural institutions like the Zoo, e.g.:
  - Dallas Zoo—Trolley
  - National Zoo—Metro
  - Bronx Zoo—Subway
9. Many community members see Balboa Park as a walking park—examples include large special events like Earth Day and Pride Fest, where the streets are closed and 10,000 people walk to and around the Park.
10. Park Circulation System: Open up and connect the Park; too many areas are fenced and the open space is fragmented. Improve walking paths, cycling paths, etc.
11. Parking impacts spill over into the neighborhoods.
12. When the BRT is implemented the Park will be used as a Park & Ride lot for downtown.
13. The Park needs a parking management strategy—paid parking needs to be part of this discussion.
14. North Park communities want more open space and better links to the entire Park.
15. Create recommendations to the improvements to the proposed Lid Over I-5. Create links to the downtown to Marston Point and from Marston Point to the Palisades.
16. The group challenged the planning team to change the paradigm. Make recommendations for local and regional transit connections.
17. Only build parking structures if the users are willing to pay to use it. Implement paid parking throughout Balboa Park.
18. Look at opportunities for shared use parking structures along 5th and 6th Avenue corridor.
19. Noise impacts along the Inspiration Point southern edge: airplane and highway noise. Has anyone studied the noise contours to determine the primary impact locations?
  - Follow up with Charlie Daniels—does the city have any information about this?
20. Are there places within the Park that are good park land and bad park land? Where are they and why are they good or bad park land?
21. Caltrans is developing a Cabrillio Freeway (SR 163) improvement plan (will have a copy sent to us).
22. The Navy was required to restore portions of Inspiration Point. According to SDPR the work was completed and was limited to the formal gardens behind the Park Administration Building.
23. Inspiration Point is used as spill over parking for the Naval Hospital and the City College.
24. Businesses and residents are using the Park on West Mesa as their own parking; since it is free and unregulated, it is being abused.
25. Cultural institutions should not be allowed to expand beyond the current leasehold lines.
26. Fifty years in the future the open space needs will be in high demand.
27. Find solution to prevent the Zoo from expanding into the parking area.

### END OF SESSION



### Stakeholder Workshop #5 Minutes

#### Balboa Park Task Force—June 5, 2003

#### ATTENDEES

Mike Behan, San Diego Park and Recreation  
Ellie Oppenheim, San Diego Park and Recreation  
Charlie Daniels, San Diego Park and Recreation  
Mark Marney, San Diego Park and Recreation  
Lara Evans, Planning Department  
Beth Murray, SDCM  
Kelly Broughton, Development Services  
Craig Gibson, Real Estate Assets Department  
Tom Hester, Civitas  
Mark Johnson, Civitas  
Rhonda Bell, Civitas  
Ross Tilghman, TDA  
Laurie Black, L J Black  
Mario Campos, Jones & Jones  
Kevin Carl, Jones & Jones

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

Overview: Mario Campos presented the Jones & Jones/ Civitas PowerPoint presentation including the team planning analysis, their assessment of Park-related issues, and several rough scenarios of how these issues may be approached in the future.

Mario explained to the group that the team's intent was not to show plan options at this point, but rather a series of tools that address each of the core layers of Park need; i.e., parking, circulation, access, land use, and open space.

After the overview the group engaged in open discussion over the presentation content. The key points were as follows:

1. Task Force comments regarding the proposed improvements to the circulator system:
  - Route locations will be critical to ensure success.
  - Build it in phases; Central Mesa, West Mesa, East Mesa.
  - Pedestrian, bike, and jogging trails are really important. The network within the Park is fragmented.
2. Regional Transit:
  - Density and land use are important criteria for transit planning. Value of service is key to federal funding for transit.
3. Comments about team's presentation:
  - There was too much emphasis on leaseholds and extractions.
  - Correct the stated percentage of open and inaccessible space.
  - Be cautious about the term "free" and open.
  - Be careful about language when presenting to the public.
  - Will the Zoo's proposal be part of the proposed plan options?
4. Traffic Analysis—The group had a number of questions about the traffic diagram and the percentage of vehicles per access point:
  - How much of the 50% shown entering from the south side at Park Boulevard are just passing through the Park?
  - What are the totals coming from Pershing and Golden Hill?
5. Special events like Earth Day and Pride Fest block the Laurel entry. This affects the entire Park's flow.
6. The Next Steps:
  - Forum on 10 July 2003: Will present analysis of the Park problems and several solutions.

#### END OF SESSION



### *City poised for the future*

by Mary L. Walshok and Laurie J. Black

*The San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 5, 2003

In the midst of multiple uncertainties in our region as well as our country, it is easy to lose sight of many promising developments and initiatives that can affect our future in a positive way. Corporate scandals, state budget crises, underfunded pension funds, the need to re-engineer and right size many forms of public and private service, *and* the troubling developments in the Middle East could lead one to conclude that we are living in the “worst of times.” While these are all matters of concern, there is still much to be excited about in the future of our region and the promise of this great state and our country.

Many developments over the last decade allow us to imagine a bright future for San Diego. The city is poised to embark on a series of initiatives as bold as previous moments in history when the city fathers (and mothers) dedicated themselves to the building of Balboa Park, the dredging of the harbor, and, more recently, the commitment of developable land on the Torrey Pines Mesa to a new University of California campus and a cluster of research institutions which are now driving our innovation-based economy. Currently, efforts are focused on renewing the cultural and civic quality of life in the region and building new models of sustainable development and urban revitalization in the heart of our region, San Diego’s downtown.

Several studies and independent initiatives have been completed, and some are being implemented, which we hope will converge into an integrated strategy to assure that San Diego becomes one of the great cities of the 21st century.

Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC), the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB), the Balboa Park Advisory Committee, North Embarcadero Visionary Plan, and the Library Commission each have plans and partners working to connect enhancements and new developments downtown, along the bay, and in time-honored Balboa Park. These studies are highly complementary and can be used as a “reference manual” to guide public policy decisions focused on ensuring a renewed and robust “urban core” for the region. Taken together, they yield a comprehensive and exciting vision for downtown San Diego.

Employing the key concepts of balance, linkage, and partnership, the various studies focus on the physical implications of proposed initiatives as they relate to land-use planning, character of growth, development, and redevelopment opportunities, and arts and cultural opportunities, as well as capital investment within the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. For example, there is a North Embarcadero plan in preparation that will overcome the isolation between downtown and its harbor.

MTDB and CCDC are concurrently updating their plans in a manner that will enhance the relationships among employment, housing, and public transit. The Park to Bay link originally envisioned in 1909 by Boston planner John Nolan has been reborn as a part of the revitalization of the East Village. It will create a pedestrian and transit-friendly link between San Diego Bay and Balboa Park—a beautifully landscaped, walkable boulevard. Along this civic spine will be a new park, a Children’s Museum, the Padres’ Petco Field, and expanded City College campus, and a new central library serving as the heart of an expanding 33-branch library system.



Organizations such as LEAD San Diego and San Diego Dialogue are focusing community forums and civic gatherings on issues of sustainable growth and development, building a sense among diverse San Diego citizens of the promise of better transportation connections between the various neighborhoods and communities of San Diego, the possibility of dense but livable housing in the downtown area, and the value of placing more diverse employment opportunities within the urban core. The mayor and City Council have actively engaged these diverse ideas and citizen groups.

Our optimism about the future comes from having the privilege of participating in the various conversations about the future and strategy sessions organized around realizing these long-term possibilities. It is exciting to talk with the thinkers, planners, visionaries, and “doers” of so many different communities and realize the complementary possibilities of so many sectors of our diverse region.

Our optimism also comes with a profound sense of history. It is in the fiber of American society and in the character of our diverse citizenry to continuously move toward the future, challenge new horizons, reinvent ourselves and re-imagine our community. It is this spirit that will carry San Diegans and all of California into the promising future we envision. We have done it before and we shall do it again.

The most significant developments in human history, and certainly in regional history, have happened because of the imagination and commitment of citizens.

Government is important, but it is usually reactive. That’s OK if it truly implements and achieves the imaginative possibilities offered by dynamic citizens and organizations committed to the region and engaged in participatory processes.

San Diego is a community characterized by creative and energetic people who can make things happen. We are less burdened by the sorts of racial, ethnic, and social class boundaries that characterize many older, more traditional cities in the United States.

Richard Florida, in his best-selling new book, “The Rise of Creative Cities,” ranks San Diego No. 1 in terms of its ability to sustain and grow an innovative and creative set of industries and quality of life. The indicators he uses sum us up perfectly. Cities that are rich in talent, tolerance, and technology are dynamic places. We would add to this list, cities that are rich in citizens committed to their place, and organizations and government agencies ready and able to collaborate, have an edge.

The combination of these factors is the essential DNA of San Diego. In spite of the difficult fiscal and international challenges ahead of us, we cannot afford to lose momentum.

We need to move from a complacent preventive approach to an aggressive approach of developing appropriate strategic and interlinked solutions which, like Balboa Park, the Bay, and the Torrey Pines Mesa, will benefit generations to come.

Walshok is associate vice chancellor for public programs at UC San Diego. Black is president of LJ Black Consulting Group.

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## ***Access, parking lead issues at Balboa Park forum***

by Theresa Miracle, *Downtown News*

*San Diego Downtown News*, 17–30 April, 2003

Make the park more pedestrian-friendly, but don't make people walk too far. Keep vehicles at the park's perimeter, but if a parking lot is necessary, make sure it's underground.

Preserve the heritage, but make the space more useful. Bring back the fountains and improve the flower gardens. Relocate the Navy Hospital. Dump the landfill.

Keep the golf course. Get rid of the golf course. Expand it. move it.

Struggling with the same issues that have been facing the park for decades, approximately 150 community members expressed their ideas at the first public forum of the Balboa Park Parking, Circulation, and Land Use Study.

The April 3 forum was designed to generate public input for recommendations and strategies that will enable the City's Park and Recreation Department to better serve the park each year. District three Councilmember Toni Atkins, whose district includes Balboa Park, and Assemblymember Christine Kehoe worked with Governor Grey Davis to obtain a \$975,000 grant for the study, which is sponsored by the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department and the Balboa Park Committee.

Charged with the mission of brainstorming their ideas and issues, the community members broke into 13 working groups of 10–14 people at round tables, equipped with an aerial map of the Balboa Park area and a flipchart where they could list their results.

"I'd like to duplicate the Laurel Street bridge idea, so people know when they're in the park," a participant at one table said.

"I'm willing to take a tram, but I'm not going to wait 45 minutes for it," one said to the attendees at his table.

"How can we encourage more people to use bicycles and rollerblades when there's a big sign in the park that says no?" asked another participant.

After the brainstorming session, a spokesperson for each group presented the main suggestions and concerns.

Improving access was a major theme, although there was a variety of opinions about whether to accomplish it through underground parking, better public transportation, improved pedestrian access, or a combination. Other prevalent input focused on restoring the canyoning area divided by Florida Street to its natural condition, limiting private uses for public spaces, and finding a new home outside the park for the Naval Hospital.

Several groups' representatives wanted the San Diego Zoo to put its Park Boulevard Promenade project on hold until the new Balboa Park study was complete. The zoo's project includes plans to increase exhibit space into the parking lot and develop underground parking near Spanish Village.

Councilmember Atkins explained at the beginning of the forum that the Zoo would be allowed to continue with the plans, but not implement them, knowing that the more comprehensive Balboa Park study might impact them.

Members of the planning team from Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects of Seattle, Civitas Urban Design and Planning of Denver, and TDA Inc., Transportation Planners, of Seattle, circulated among the tables to listen.

Mario Campos, principal of Jones & Jones, pointed out that the decisions made now would be a legacy for the future. "People can see, when California is all urbanized, what California used to look like," Campos said.

He added that the forums would be part of hundreds of conversations about the park, and a website would be created for people who couldn't attend the meetings. "We want to help you shape a solution with the vision driven by you, the community," he said. "The decisions we're asked to make will be tough. We don't want them to be arbitrary."

The next public forum will be July 10 at 6 p.m. at the Balboa Park Club, 2150 Pan American Road.



## ***Balboa Park Forum Focuses On Parking—Other ideas range from restoring canyon and lake to moving zoo***

by Erin H. Korntved

*North Park News*, Vol. 11 No. 4, May 2003

The first new public forum on Balboa Park parking, circulation, and land use study attracted nearly 150 people to share their visions for the park with the planning team, led by Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects of Seattle and Civitas Urban Design and Planning of Denver.

Many shared similar ideas about what they value about the park and what they would like changed. The most commonly expressed were restoring Florida Canyon to its natural state, reducing the number of vehicles in the park, improving the park transit system, new recreational areas on Central Mesa and Inspiration Point, and extending the park from its delineated 1,400-acre square to include naturally adjoining canyons.

"We want to see our vision persist for the next 50, 75, 100 years," said Mario Campos, principal architect with Jones & Jones.

The firm was selected unanimously as consultant by the Balboa Park Committee. "They had a spark that set them apart," says Dan Mazzella, chairman of the committee that co-sponsored the forum with the city park and recreation department.

Attendees discussed problems and solutions in small groups and then presented their ideas to the forum. They were asked to focus on the empty sites of the Central Mesa and Inspiration Point, as well as the fact that some areas of the park are strained by overuse while other areas are underused.

"The greening of the park, keeping parking out of Central Mesa, respecting historical and natural connections of the landform so that Switzer Canyon doesn't arbitrarily cut off, protecting the environment—what we have left of it—especially Florida Canyon," were ideas important to Vicki Granowitz, a North Park resident and member of the Balboa Park Committee.

The location and number of parking lots were sources of differing opinions. "We decided we didn't want any cars in the park," says Biana Romani, a North Park resident. "We wanted parking on the outside of the park. We would also like to see Florida Canyon closed to cars."

Parking is a challenge because lots often fill up during park events. The shortage of spaces also increases when the Navy Hospital and City College use the park lots for their overflow parking.

Steve Fobes, North Park resident representing the San Diego Zoo, says the solution is larger parking lots. "I'd like to eliminate small parking lots and have large underground parking with land use on top," he said. "We could put one by the zoo, Inspiration point, by the Laurel Street Bridge and also behind the Organ Pavilion."

Keoni Rosa, a member of the Greater North Park Planning Committee, says the solution is getting rid of most parking lots and creating a park transit system, like the historic streetcar, to travel throughout the park. He also wants to maintain the current footprint of the cultural institutions.

Some extreme ideas were discussed, including closing the 163 freeway to restore the lake that used to exist beneath the Laurel Street Bridge, relocating the zoo to the Wild Animal Park, moving the Navy Hospital out of the park, and removing the golf course.

Jones & Jones presented photographs of parks from around the world and explained the planning required to keep park areas open in urban areas. The firm has worked on parks in Tucson, Ariz., Denver, and Memphis, Tenn. Members of the planning team have been learning about Balboa Park since November and say they want to challenge traditional thinking as they plan the park's future.

Three more public forums are planned; the next will most likely be in July.

The San Diego Zoological Society's own specific parking plan, centered on Park Boulevard, also is moving through the city planning process. Gail MacLeod, the zoo's project manager, says the plan's environmental impact report should be completed in June and the plan should go before the City Council in the fall.

MacLeod adds that members of the zoo team can assist in the new Balboa Park study. "We're making ourselves available and we are sharing our information," she says.

*Terence J. Burke contributed to this report.*



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