

| **A VISION PLAN FOR GRIFFITH PARK**
AN URBAN WILDERNESS IDENTITY

| ~~**A MASTER PLAN FOR GRIFFITH PARK**~~

Product of Work Completed By:

Griffith Park Working Group

| July, 2005 -- October, 2008

(Revision H)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION TO THE GRIFFITH PARK MASTER VISION PLAN

I. SIGNIFICANCE

Griffith Park, the largest Open Space in the City of Los Angeles, comprises 4217.87 acres of dedicated parkland. It is the largest natural wilderness within the City's limits, containing numerous distinct ecosystems that nurture numerous native plants and wildlife species. The Park is designated by UCLA as a *County of Los Angeles Critical Environmental Area*, and is considered an essential link in the Southern California wildlife corridor stretching from the Santa Monica to the Verdugo Mountain Ranges. Situated wholly within the *California Floristic Province*, ~~the Park is~~ considered one of 34 biodiversity hotspots for conservation worldwide by Conservation International, the Park requires special consideration due to its high level of diversity, endemism, and the degree to which it is threatened.

At the same time, Griffith Park is the most facility-filled park in the City, with more major attractions, museums, developed playgrounds, picnic areas, golf courses, sports venues, pools, commercial concessions, educational facilities, camps, special amenities, sprinklers, roads, parking spaces, asphalt and concrete than any other. In terms of core significance, these manmade enjoyments are important but not definitive and in some cases have been identified as character-defining features of the park. Most major cities can boast landscaped parks with built amenities. Los Angeles is one of the few that additionally offers an authentic and accessible wilderness within its urban core.

The defining characteristic of this resource can be traced to the original intent of the Park's benefactor, Colonel Griffith J. Griffith. A poor boy himself, he donated his land to the City to provide Angelenos with a natural respite from the surrounding metropolis. He envisioned a park that would be a "safety valve" from urban pressures providing "open space – rustic and available to all."¹

¹ Eberts, Mike, *Griffith Park: A Centennial History*, Historical Society of Southern California (1996).

Colonel Griffith wrote:

Give nature a chance to do her good work and nature will give every person a greater opportunity in health, strength and mental power.²

Colonel Griffith articulated his vision in 1896. Since then, Los Angeles has become a web of density, but Griffith Park has managed to retain its great open space, its ability to put people in touch with California's authentic landscapes and natural history more precious than ever before. With rising transportation costs and diminishing expendable income ~~robbing-making it more challenging for~~ families ~~of the opportunity~~ to visit State and Federal natural lands, Colonel Griffith's gift, which he stipulated be free of charge to users in perpetuity, is beyond valuation.

II. THE MASTER VISION PLAN PROCESS

In June 2003, the City embarked on a new master plan for Griffith Park that would ~~govern its management and uses~~ guide its management and use for the next 25 years. Extensive input from the park-using public was collected in three ~~heavily attended~~ subsequent workshops ~~hosted by planning consultants~~. ~~The vision that emerged from these public sessions found, that in a congested 21st-century metropolis, the Park's natural spaces were more important than ever before. Citing population density pressures, participants recommended that the Park's wilderness identity be sustained and preserved through careful and informed stewardship. Citing the same population and density pressures, the Draft Plan prepared by the consultants released on March 30, 2005 (the Melendrez Draft), took the opposite view. It envisioned a park that was more of an urban and commercial destination. It recommended decreasing the Park's natural and open spaces to allow for a dramatic acceleration of its manmade attractions and attendant imposition of new charges and fees. The Master Plan that was developed, known as the Melendrez Draft, was ultimately rejected by the Councilmember of the District, the General Manager of the Department of Recreation and Parks and the public. The Councilmember then established the Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group to work with the department staff to develop a new vision for the park. The result of that process is this Griffith Park Vision Plan. The public's response to the Draft's recommendations was negative. As a result, in July 2005, the Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group was seated to write a new Master Plan that reflected the~~

² Griffith, Griffith J., *Parks, Boulevards and Playgrounds*, Prison Reform League (1910).

| ~~public's vision.~~³

³ See Appendix 24 hereto for a list of the members and their affiliations.

The Working Group determined that many of the Draft's more controversial conclusions were not grounded in fact or need. The panel then began at the beginning, compiling inventories of Griffith Park's major user groups, recreational amenities, cultural venues, buildings and built elements, mobility features and management structures. It read the Park's history and considered the role of Griffith Park within the context of the City's municipal park system. It studied data about the Park's wilderness areas to understand its native species, human-wildlife interface, and its role in the greater Santa Monica Mountains ecosystem. It took into account the thousands of comments on the released Draft filed with the Recreation and Parks Department and listened to public comment made at each of its monthly public meetings.⁴ It acquainted itself with the rapidly growing urban wilderness movement that was preserving old and creating new natural parks in major North American cities.⁵

Midway through its activities, the wildfire of May 8, 2007, blackened more than 800 acres of Griffith Park and reaffirmed that the Park is at a critical juncture. In its aftermath, the Recreation and Parks Department convened a Fire Recovery Task Force composed of scientists and professionals from federal, state and local agencies and science-based non-profits. From the Task Force grew the first Griffith Park Wildlife Management Plan. Commissioned by the Department, the Plan documents the Park's biodiversity, assists in its land management decisions, and recommends ways to ensure the successful co-existence between the wildlife species supported by the Park and its human users. In the course of its compilation, scientists discovered that Griffith Park is the last bastion of several species experts thought had disappeared from the City and County, underlining the Park's critical role in the continuance of the City's natural heritage. The Working Group supports the Wildlife Management Plan's recommendations and includes that Plan's executive summary and species lists as Appendix 1 to this [Master-Vision](#) Plan.

[While this planning document is not a Master Plan for Griffith Park, it is the intent of the Working Group, the Department, the City, and the public that the ideas contained herein be used to guide decisions made for Griffith Park until such a time that a full Master Plan be developed and adopted. A Master Plan for Griffith Park would be expected to follow the Vision for the Park as outlined in this Plan, and also contain specific projects for the Park which are environmentally sound and fiscally sustainable.](#)

⁴ Appendix 28 provides a summary of the public comments.

⁵ Appendix 23 provides a listing of such parks.

III. MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS OF THIS MASTER VISION PLAN

Griffith Park is one of 402-415 parks operated by the Recreation and Parks Department of the City of Los Angeles, several of which are unique properties with defined purposes derived from their historic, perceived or actual roles.⁶ Recognizing Griffith Park's unique identity as an easily accessible natural, open space for the enjoyment of free recreation, a destination for nature appreciation, a linchpin in the health and survival of Southern California's native ecosystems, and the urgent need to sustain the Park in the face of encroaching development, this Master Vision Plan includes among its recommendations:

Griffith Park's longstanding role and function as the City's greatest natural, open space be recognized and that the Park be designated, managed and maintained as an Urban Wilderness, with the ultimate goal to preserve, enhance and sustain the rich biodiversity that exists in the Park today.

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Griffith Park's longstanding role and function as a place of free enjoyment be continued in the 21st century, placing emphasis on non-fee activities, with fee-based activities (not including special events) kept to the status quo and such charges held to the minimum necessary for continued operation.

Griffith Park's established recreational uses and users be recognized and that the City avoid their displacement.

A significant portion of Griffith Park's 28 acre Central Service Yard be reclaimed for new active and passive public Recreation.

Griffith Park's Los Angeles River frontage and lands be restored as a riparian habitat for nature viewing, education and enjoyment, in keeping with the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan.

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⁶ Appendix 29. For example, Barnsdall Park has been designated an Art Park, Robert Burns Park a Passive Use Park and Runyon Canyon an Off-Leash Dog Park.

In keeping with Griffith Park's wilderness interior and the closure plan in place, Toyon Canyon Landfill be restored as a natural, passive-use meadow.

Griffith Park's natural areas be expanded by acquiring remaining open spaces within and around its borders.

An ~~independent Citizens Park~~ Advisory Board to work with and advise Griffith Park's management on maintaining the Park as an Urban Wilderness and oversee implementation of the goals and recommendations in ~~the Master~~this Vision Plan for the course of the Plan.

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All recommendations contained in this Vision Plan will be considered as the funding for and feasibility of such recommendations are identified. Recommendations carried over into any subsequent Master Plan for Griffith Park would require identification of the resources necessary to implement those recommendations.

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IV. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

A. *To Be Initiated Immediately*

Designate Griffith Park as an Urban Wilderness.

Adopt the Griffith Park Wildlife Management Plan for the entirety of Griffith Park.

Create and staff the position of Park Ecologist to oversee, in conjunction with maintenance management, the implementation of the Wildlife Management Plan's practices throughout the Park.

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Establish the [Citizens Park](#) Advisory Board and initiate regular meetings to oversee implementation of the Griffith Park [Master Vision](#) Plan goals.

B. *One to Five Year Goals*

Increase maintenance staffing throughout the Park.

Begin repair of degraded ecosystems and watersheds.

Begin restoration of degraded historical features.

Implement a remote parking system with shuttles for peak-use weekends.

Work with the City and County to increase public transportation to and within the Park.

Consolidate Central Service Yard functions to reclaim as much area as possible for active and passive recreation.

Complete construction of a pedestrian/equestrian bridge over the Los Angeles River to connect Atwater Village and the Atwater Rancho Equestrian community to the Park.

[Designate the Nevin's Barberrry mitigation site that was established as a result of the taking of the plant during the Griffith Observatory Restoration Project, located approximately 2.5 miles north of the](#)

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[Observatory off of the Toyon Trail on a north-facing slope at an elevation of 1,000 feet, as a Rare Plant Preserve.](#)

C. *Five to Ten Year Goals*

Evaluate results of one to five year goals.
Restore Toyon Canyon to passive-use meadow.

Switch from asphalt to permeable surface parking lots throughout the Park as major maintenance comes due.

Promote restoration of the Headworks area of the Park consistent with open space goals and the Urban Wilderness Identity.

Establish Griffith Park as a civic venue for nature study and environmental awareness.

Establish a Regional Parks Division within Recreation and Parks to provide focused management and expertise for the City's regional parks with natural terrain and other unique attractions as defined by the City Plan.

D. *Ten to Fifteen Year Goals*

Evaluate results of five to ten year goals.

Create linkages between Griffith Park, Elysian Park and the Los Angeles River to increase recreation and open space in Northeast Los Angeles.

CHAPTER ONE

A VISION FOR GRIFFITH PARK

I. AN URBAN WILDERNESS IDENTITY

Griffith Park is a natural refuge surrounded by an intense urban environment. It is characterized by extensive open space that connects people with the natural heritage of California, as well the physical and cultural history of Los Angeles. Historically, a diversity of uses has been accommodated within the Park. ~~But~~ However, in the face of growing urban development and receding contact with nature, ~~the public recognizes that perhaps~~ the Park's greatest value for 21st century Los Angeles is its ability to reconnect people with the natural world. To accomplish this, the primary management principle for this Park ~~should~~will be to preserve and restore the natural resources and ecosystems in order to enhance the Park's wilderness qualities. This governing management principle will establish a unique Urban Wilderness Identity for Griffith Park, one which fosters a visitor experience that is apart from urban infringements.⁷

The Park will remain an oasis in our urban environment. The majority of the Park will continue to be comprised of natural terrain with native Southern California landscape that also serves as a habitat for California wildlife. Trails for hikers and equestrians will continue to wind through the hills and flats, taking care to minimize impacts on protected natural systems. The natural watershed, including the Los Angeles River, will be a key element of the Park's sustainable infrastructure system. Environmentally sensitive and responsible practices incorporated throughout the Park will demonstrate to Park visitors the many ways we can operate in harmony with the natural world.

Griffith Park has a rich history. There are many stories to be told, and there are remnants of earlier days that remain in the Park today. The Park as a whole, and historic areas within the Park, shall be considered "cultural landscapes" that need preservation and rehabilitation, as have been identified by the recent

⁷ Los Angeles is not unique in creating an Urban Wilderness Identity for its major park. Appendix 23 is a list of other communities which are proceeding in a similar manner.

[designation of Griffith Park as a Historic Cultural Monument](#). The Park's developed areas, historical and cultural elements, and interpretative exhibits are valuable resources to be administered and preserved consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

Sustaining and protecting the Park's ecosystem will guide maintenance and repairs as well as future improvements or development. [Those areas of the Park which have been defined as the Wilderness Area per the Griffith Park Historic Resources Map shall be treated in such a way as to protect that historically sensitive resource. Those areas of the Park which are currently developed should be treated with best management practices which enhance the existing character of the Park.](#) Consistent with this [Master Vision](#) Plan, whether major or minor in scope, all work in the Park [must-should](#) be designed and executed in harmony with the Park's identity as authentic wilderness in an urban setting. Concepts such as watershed management, storm water retention and filtering, natural drainage, recycling of waste, reforestation and habitat protection [must-should](#) be integrated into the Park's ecosystem, which includes both the natural Park areas and the developed areas.

II. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Manage the Park as a Natural Area Consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity
 - A. Maintain the [wilderness area of the](#) Park ~~overall~~ as a nature and wildlife preserve.
 - B. Minimize the impact of intensive uses.
 - C. Identify and preserve historic and cultural Park resources, [as per the Historic Designation](#).
 - D. Promote natural qualities, reduce urban intrusions [in the wilderness area](#) and provide for informal recreation.
 - E. Reclaim Headworks, Toyon Canyon Landfill and other such facilities as wilderness areas.
 - F. Consider for acquisition all available contiguous property, including undeveloped land to the west

of the Park, for use as public open space and native habitat.

- G. Evaluate ~~all~~ new uses, programs, and facilities, or expansion of existing uses, programs, and facilities, against the criteria of enhancing the Park's natural attributes and resources, and preserving and maintaining the Urban Wilderness Identity.
 - H. Manage Park programming and events consistent with the natural preservation aims of the Urban Wilderness Identity.
2. Implement Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Programs and Policies Within the Park
- A. Maintain the valuable natural resources within the Park.
 - B. Implement a watershed management system that maximizes natural drainage systems, retention of storm water, filtering and discharging the water table, and connections to the Los Angeles River.
 - C. Increase and restore natural habitat and native vegetation.
 - D. Recycle and reuse Park waste.
 - E. Increase and facilitate wildlife corridors: (1) between habitats within the Park; (2) to natural areas contiguous to the Park, especially the Los Angeles River and land areas to the west, allowing better ecological connectivity of the entire Santa Monica Mountain Range.
 - F. Improve parking surfaces and systems to reduce heat and to release areas for restoration of natural landscape.
3. Improve Park Mobility

- A. Make the Park universally accessible while protecting the natural environment.
 - B. In keeping with the Urban Wilderness Identity, develop a comprehensive transportation system that provides circulation within the Park.
 - C. Develop maps and signage that are consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.
4. Promote an Urban Wilderness Identity in the Park Reinforced by the Design of Facilities and Amenities
- A. Define and consistently reinforce the unique character of the Park with every decision and communication related to the Park.
 - B. Implement design guidelines throughout the Park for all improvements and repairs to existing facilities, amenities and infrastructure.
 - C. Develop Park signage and Park information consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.
5. Focus Park Management on the Urban Wilderness Identity and Improve Accountability and Effectiveness
- A. All personnel of Recreation and Parks are responsible for ensuring that the Park maintains its Urban Wilderness Identity consistent with the principles of ~~the~~ this Master Vision Plan.
 - B. Sustain and create volunteer opportunities that promote long-term community stewardship of the Park.
 - C. Continue to promote the existing diversity of recreation and enjoyment by individuals and small groups, and improve management of all special events, particularly large special events, to minimize impact on the Park ~~and interference with Park users~~.

- D. Increase dedicated staff with special expertise on natural communities, historic and cultural resources, and resource management.
- E. In consultation with the community, establish a permanent [Community Park](#) Advisory Board to assist in achieving this [vision-Vision](#) of Griffith Park.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HUMAN DIMENSION

I. INTRODUCTION

Foreseeing the day when park land would be a precious resource unavailable to most residents of a densely developed metropolis, Colonel Griffith specifically enjoined that Griffith Park be a free public park in perpetuity so that “plain people” could enjoy the curative powers of open space – available to all. Over the years, human enjoyment of the Park has developed largely in step with its benefactor’s vision: the Park’s established user groups share with its donor an appreciation of its unique role as a respite from urban pressures.

In planning for the future of the Park, it is important to take into account its human dimension and recognize who its human visitors are, and how, when, where and why they make recreational use of the Park. These users are hikers and walkers, picnickers, equestrians, bicyclists, runners, active sport participants (who play golf, soccer, baseball, tennis, volleyball and basketball), people who swim for sport and fitness, visitors to its museums and major attractions, patrons of children’s camps and individuals using the public space for meetings and activities. Once an overview is gained of the Park’s human dimension, it can be joined to an understanding of its plant and animal world to produce a plan for the Park that is compatible with its identity as an Urban Wilderness and that equitably provides for its users.

II. HIKERS

Hikers are not only the largest user group in Griffith Park - almost twenty-five percent (25%) of its visitors hike or walk - they are one of the oldest. During his brief service as a City of Los Angeles Park Commissioner in 1903, Colonel Griffith pioneered the first access for hikers, blazing a road from Crystal Springs to the narrow canyon at the foot of Bee Rock. It became a popular route for early Griffith Park hikers that is still used today.

Hiking is part of the Park’s most accessible form of recreation and, as such, fulfills the Colonel’s vision of “a park for the people.” Of all its user groups, hikers are its most diverse. People of all ages, toddlers to senior citizens, hike. They hail from every ethnic group and social class regardless of income level since the activity involves no fee or investment in equipment or training. The reasons people hike in

the Park are as diverse as the people themselves: health and fitness, reinforcement of family ties, sociability, personal relaxation, nature appreciation and escape from urban pressures. The State of California's 2005 survey of recreation trends bears out this form of recreation's centrality to Park enjoyment.⁸ Among all Californians, recreational walking in the outdoors ranks first, wildlife viewing third, and trail hiking fourth in popularity.

Although most Griffith Park hikers walk individually or in small groups, the Park is a focal point for organized hiking. Park rangers lead interpretative hikes; scouting organizations, children's day camps and the Park's resident boys' and girls' camps offer hikes for kids; and established entities ranging from the Los Angeles Unified School District to the Sierra Club hold periodic nature hikes. Since the early 1960s, the Sierra Club has also sponsored year-round evening hikes in Griffith Park, attracting hundreds of hikers each week.

Most regular hikers prefer to begin their excursions in the morning or towards the onset of evening, avoiding the absence of shade and the higher temperatures and somnolence of mid-day. Griffith Park's wildlife are more easily heard and seen, and the sights and smells of its plant communities are better perceived, at these times. Those who drive to the Park generally find parking easily near the initial road or trail head they select. All hikers do not arrive by car, however. Many Some who hike on a regular basis walk into the Park from access points on all sides. The extra distance that this adds to the outing is compensated for by the freedom and pleasure derived from an automobile-free experience. Other hikers arrive by public transit and choose from various stops that place them in the Park or near its boundaries in relatively close proximity to its roads and trail heads.

Expecting a tranquil experience free of urban incursions, hikers make few demands. They generally bring their own water and leave behind little trash; if trash cans are absent, a "pack it in, pack it out" ethic prevails. The recent installation of waste bag dispensers at several points in the Park has encouraged dog-walkers to clean up after their pets and, increasingly, responsible owners are bringing their own bags for this purpose. A major personal safety and security issue for hikers was resolved a decade ago with the closure of the Park's interior roads. Antisocial and criminal activity facilitated by automobiles disappeared with the cars; the resultant safety and tranquility transformed the roads into ideal routes for low and moderately skilled hikers. The road closure also opened them up for bicyclists and parents of infants in strollers to exercise in a traffic-free zone and provided equestrians and trail

⁸ See Appendix 4 hereto.

runners safe passage to trail heads.

III. PICNICKERS

More than a million people a year enjoy picnicking in Griffith Park and using the space for family gatherings such as birthdays, weddings and quinceañeras. The Park provides a welcoming backyard where families of all income levels can gather together. More than nine percent (9%) of respondents in a recent study conducted at the Park name picnicking as their preferred Park activity.⁹ Annually, more people come to Griffith Park for this use than to any other park in the municipal system. The Park features more than a dozen major, free, developed picnic grounds, as well as four group picnic areas available by reservation only and one group area accessible on a first-come basis. Additionally, there are green spaces throughout the Park that are used as settings for informal, blanket-style picnics: Park Central, Griffith Park Recreation Center, Mulholland Fountain, Vermont Canyon, Western Canyon and Bronson Canyon are just a few of these locales.

A. Family Picnicking

Griffith Park offers picnickers a range of settings from intimate nooks for quiet enjoyment to areas roomy enough for a child's birthday party. In addition to providing tables, benches and other amenities such as grills, drinking fountains and restrooms at these sites, the Park's free developed playgrounds and play structures are typically located at or near its picnic areas.¹⁰ As a group, Griffith Park picnickers are self-directed. They bring their own provisions, camp furniture and blankets, co-exist peaceably with each other, and, content with the amenities the Park provides, make few demands beyond maintenance and clean-up. Occasional infractions by this large, diverse group can include taping off areas for exclusive use, un-permitted play structures and amplified sounds.

⁹ See Appendix 3 hereto. For a listing of picnic tables that existed in late 2007, see Appendix 8 hereto.

¹⁰ Notable among the playgrounds is Shane's Inspiration, the first of [three](#) [fourteen](#) universally accessible playgrounds within the City of Los Angeles.

Although the Park attracts picnickers from all backgrounds, on week-ends and holidays Hispanic picnickers are typically in the majority. This cultural group's enjoyment of picnicking is borne out by a ten-year United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service/BLM study confirming that Hispanic Californians' first recreational preference is for day-long extended-family outings in a green setting involving extensive onsite meal preparation. A State of California survey found that these users desire more opportunities to walk outdoors for fitness and fun.¹¹ The close proximity of trails to picnic areas allows them to do this, making the Park an even more attractive destination.

B. Permit Picnicking for Groups

The Crystal Springs group picnic area is the only area that can be reserved for group use in Griffith Park. It offers three picnic pads with tables and barbecues on shaded slabs, a volleyball court, restrooms and parking. The term "picnicking" is elastic in this context. While social celebrations and company gatherings are held at Crystal Springs, large public events such as cooking expositions and health and fitness jamborees – often requiring signage, stages, canopies and booths – are also held there. Paid monitoring by Park Rangers is mandated for events exceeding 300 persons or serving alcohol, and organizers are sometimes required to hire maintenance personnel for post-picnic clean-up. Because the area is adjacent to other public uses, the impact a group event will have on neighboring recreational users and the Park itself is taken into account in the awarding of permits. The fees charged for permits are determined by the number of persons (up to 800), number and type of temporary structures, and use of electricity and personnel from the Department of Recreation and Parks.

C. The Issue of Displacement

During the first two decades of the 20th century, the City's Park Commission made it a priority to establish formal picnic grounds in Griffith Park. Decades later, new types of recreation ~~eclipsed picnicking in the eyes of the decision makers and were introduced into the Park and~~, with the exception of Fern Dell, the Park's historic picnic grounds vanished or contracted, displaced by built facilities or taken by condemnation for public works. ~~The shifting and loss of picnic terrain and the tendency to consider picnicking an expendable use is reflected today in proposals for new or expanded facilities that inevitably come at the expense of the Park's picnic areas. A recent example is the removal from continuous picnicking use of a~~

¹¹ See Appendix 4 hereto.

~~large portion of the lawn north of the Griffith Park pool that has been fenced off for the exclusive use of spectators at the occasional swim meets that occur during the four months a year when the pool is open.~~ Because picnickers have no advocacy group that speaks specifically for them, it is incumbent on Park managers and the public to ensure that priority is given to the needs of this large user group to prevent their displacement are represented and balanced with the needs of all other park user groups.

IV. EQUESTRIANS

Equestrians are Griffith Park's original user group. Horses have flourished within its boundaries since Rancho days. Colonel Griffith prided himself on his horsemanship and he and his son, Van, often roamed the Park's hills on horseback. In the first decades of the 20th century, the City pastured its police and fire horses in the Park's open meadows, and photographs from that period inevitably show riders on its trails. In the nineteen-teens, rodeos were organized at Griffith Park by the cowboys attracted to Hollywood by the nascent film industry. In the twenties and thirties, the Park emerged as a headquarters for social riding and equestrian parties hosted by the elite. This reached its heights in The Breakfast Club. For a fifteen-year run beginning in 1924, the Breakfast Club brought together civic and corporate leaders, motion picture personalities and visiting dignitaries for weekly rides on the Park's trails.

~~Although affluent horse owners can be encountered today at occasional Equestrian Center competitions, Today~~ the majority of Griffith Park riders are neither wealthy nor prominent but rather. ~~They are middle-class~~ people who make economies in their lives to support their riding, day visitors who rent horses to connect with nature and history, and parents who introduce their children to horses at the Park's hugely popular Pony Ride concession. The children of Los Angeles are also exposed to ~~the mysteries of~~ horsemanship through organized camp activities at Griffith Park. Throughout the summer and during holiday periods, the Griffith Park's boys' and girls' camps, Girl and Boy Scout troop camps, and privately operated children's camps from around the region conduct group rides on the Park's trails.

Currently, there are more than 2,000 horses living in and around the Park, stabled in facilities and backyards on the Park's edges. In addition to its resident equine population, hundreds of other horses are transported to the Park each week for equestrian events and shows or trail riding.

The area northeast of the Park, near its Los Angeles Equestrian Center (LAEC), is an important hub of equine activity. Public rental stables, large

commercial boarding stables, small boarding operations and backyard barns without number are located here, along with feed and tack stores, veterinarians, equine dentists and chiropractors, farriers, horse laundries, heavy equipment vendors and trainers of every kind. A significant number of horse owners reside in the LAEC-adjacent condominiums and in the Rancho tract, a community of homes zoned for horsekeeping. Southeast of the Park is Atwater Village, an historic horsekeeping neighborhood that is home to a half-dozen commercial boarding stables, some of which feature riding schools and training operations. Several of the facilities are notable for their youth programs. This is where Girl Scouts can earn their horsemanship badges, horse camps for kids are held, and Taking the Reins, a non-profit organization helping at-risk girls build self-esteem, is headquartered. A local organization, Preserve Atwater Rancho, is working with the City on a zoning initiative to preserve the area's historical horsekeeping status. Northwest of the Park is Sunset Ranch. Established in the twenties to serve the Hollywoodland tract, its direct linkage to Griffith Park's trails was marketed as one of the neighborhood's chief selling assets. Today it is a public rental and boarding stable that has carved a unique niche for itself with its guided night-rides, round-trip tours of the Park that include a restaurant dinner.

A. Bridle Trails

Griffith Park is crisscrossed with 55 miles of bridle trails that equestrians share with hikers, runners, deer, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, hawks and owls, and, occasionally, an elusive bobcat or mountain lion.

B. Martinez Arena

Located near Travel Town in Griffith Park, Martinez Arena serves backyard horse owners of modest means, providing these users with a place to school and ride their horses. Created under the aegis of Park Ranger Abe Martinez in the early sixties, it is free to the individual user. The arena is also rented to organizations for horse shows, gymkhanas and other equestrian events for a nominal fee.

C. North Atwater Equestrian Arena

Atwater Village backyard horse owners use the Park's North Atwater Equestrian Arena to turn out and train their horses. Critical to horsekeeping in that area, this facility serves the public in ways similar to Martinez Arena.

D. Pony Rides

For a minimal charge, Griffith Park's popular Pony Ride concession introduces children to the thrill of the trot. Located on Crystal Springs Drive, it also offers wagon rides for children and their families and is near the Park's most heavily used picnic grounds.

E. Los Angeles Equestrian Center

The Los Angeles Equestrian Center (LAEC) in Griffith Park is the region's leading equine facility. Annually, it hosts the Bill Pickett Rodeo, Los Angeles National Grand Prix, Memorial Day Classic and Pacific Coast Cutting Futurity. It also hosts numerous breed and discipline events, dressage, western, barrel races, show jumping, and driving competitions. Home to 500 horses, it offers outdoor rings, hot walkers, sun pens and other amenities for training and care of the horses. Additionally, the public can rent mounts from Griffith Park Horse Rentals or learn to ride at its Traditional Equitation School.

LAEC also hosts riding programs for non-profit organizations. Best known are the Ahead With Horses Therapeutic Riding Program for children at risk and the Interscholastic Equestrian League, which is composed of 60 middle and high schools. Annual events that welcome the public include the Tournament of Roses Equestrian Festival permitting children to see and touch Rose Parade horses. The annual events also include the CALNET Special Olympics-style riding event and the Hollywood Charity Horse Show. The latter event donates the proceeds to non-profit organizations serving children.

V. RUNNERS

Although hundreds of runners use Griffith Park every day and often thousands use it on weekends, runners are among the Park's most under-recognized user groups. Their needs are small and they typically recreate at off-peak hours, particularly in the early morning. The flat terrain in the Park's east and north offers the most attractive routes for most runners. For routine workouts, runners commonly follow north-south Crystal Springs Drive and transition to the Zoo parking on the east-west portion of Zoo Drive. To add distance, many cross into Burbank via Victory Boulevard or continue along Forest Lawn Drive, where they are relatively safe from traffic hazards. Because loop routes are most interesting, some runners use Griffith Park Drive combined with Zoo Drive and Crystal Springs Drive. This

route adds hills but can be hazardous since it exposes runners to closely passing vehicles.

For runners who enjoy mountain trails, the Park has much to offer. Runners have little environmental impact on trail beds and are generally environmentally conscious. They recognize the hazards of straying, including encounters with poison oak and rattlesnakes, and are seldom guilty of the trail-cutting and consequent erosion seen in the Park. Mt. Hollywood Trail and Tetrick Trail are two of the most popular trail-running routes.

A. Raceday Events

While the Park is a magnet for individual runners, it periodically hosts organized events for large groups. For many decades, the Park has been the City's venue of choice for 5K and 10K road races, as well as other distances and relays. These are usually headquartered in the Park Central area. Weekend events such as the Jimmy Stewart Relay, Run for a Green L.A., and Say No To Drugs Race, among others, promote fitness and the sport of running, benefit worthy causes, and draw positive publicity and new people to the Park.

B. Youth Running

Griffith Park is an important resource for the Los Angeles Unified School District's team sport of cross-country running. The Park is only one of three courses used by the District's eight leagues, yet it hosts almost half of the meets. These competitions, which occur weekly in the fall, typically draw 500 athletes from twenty-two high schools to a staging area on the picnic lawn north of the Greek Theatre in Vermont Canyon. From this starting point, runners follow a looping course through the south end of the Park. After the race, athletes return to the lawn for water and refreshments provided by coaches, parents and chaperons. For the past three decades on the last Saturday in September, the Bell-Jeff Cross-Country invitation meet, an all-day event, draws more than 1,000 participants from 75 schools throughout Southern California to this same staging area.

VI. BICYCLISTS

Although bicyclists have always used Griffith Park's paved roads, over the past decade bicycle use has grown significantly as the Park has steadily increased and improved its bicycle lanes and routes. This has happened as a result of:

1. Specific capital improvements made in accordance with the

Bicycle Element of the Department of Transportation's Master Plan, which promotes the expansion and upgrading of bicycle facilities in the City; and

2. As a consequence of a policy change undertaken for general Park safety that provided substantial new opportunities for safe and enjoyable cycling.

There are now more than 26 miles of bikeways and bike routes in the Park. Approximately 23 miles of them are auto-free. According to the most recent user study, cyclists now exceed the number of visitors who visit the Park to play golf or participate in sports, and are roughly equal to equestrian users.

In the mid-1990s, the decision to permanently close Griffith Park's paved mountain roads to motorized traffic opened up a new auto-free zone for recreational users in the Park's interior. Although hikers, not cyclists, took the lead in advocating for the closures of Mt. Hollywood Drive and Vista del Valle Drive to all but official and emergency vehicles, cyclists had an immediate benefit from the change. The action multiplied significantly the number of auto-free miles at cyclists' disposal. Wide enough to reduce the chance of collisions between bicyclists and pedestrians, these scenic, winding roads allow peaceful co-existence between users – and offer cyclists interaction with nature and inspiring views.

Cyclists of all ages and skill levels enjoy Griffith Park. They range from occasional riders who rent from its concessionaire to skilled riders who arrive on (or transport) their own equipment. Choosing from available routes, cyclists enjoy relatively flat and smooth rides suitable for family outings or long distance or race training, as well as steep and challenging rides for personal fitness or nature enjoyment.

VII. ACTIVE SPORT PARTICIPANTS

In addition to the facilities of a Regional Park described in the General Plan for the City of Los Angeles as golf courses, campgrounds, wilderness areas, exceptional scenic features, and museums, Griffith Park contains facilities for active recreation usually found in neighborhood or community parks.¹² It contains the municipal park system's highest number of golf courses (5), driving ranges (2),

¹² See Appendix 18 for the City's Public Recreation Plan detailing the active recreation facility plan for the City.

tennis courts (27), soccer fields (8 if used for adults, 16 if used for youth), an adult regulation baseball field (1 of 2 citywide), two walk-up softball/youth baseball fields, two walk-up volleyball courts, a basketball court, and the most popular municipal pool in the city. In addition to these facilities, archery, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and baseball are played at Griffith Park Boys Camp and both the Boys and Girls camps are equipped with pools. A recent survey of the Park's recreational users found that five percent (5%) of respondents engaged in field and court sports, while three percent (3%) were golfers.¹³

A. Golfers

Griffith Park is considered the birthplace of municipal golf. The first city-owned public golf course in the nation was established in the Park in 1914. Although it was a primitive course with sand "greens," it met with success. Over the decades, more golf courses were developed in the Park and today, roughly nine percent (9%) of its area is devoted to the sport. More than 200,000 rounds of golf are played annually on its five courses. These include Wilson 18-hole course, Harding 18-hole course, Roosevelt 9-hole executive course, Los Feliz 9-hole 3 par course, and Tregnan Junior Golf Academy. Wilson-Harding amenities for golfers include a driving range, men's and women's clubhouses, a pro shop, golf lessons, cart rentals and a restaurant and a bar. Cafés serving beer and wine are located at Roosevelt and Los Feliz, and, in addition to its 3-hole teaching course and driving range, Tregnan Academy features a clubhouse and classroom where children can learn the principles of the game.

B. Field Sport Participants

1. Soccer

Recognizing the growing popularity of soccer, in 1992 the Recreation and Parks Department set aside 26 acres in Griffith Park to create the Ferraro Soccer Complex. This is a grassy facility located near the Golden State-Ventura Freeway Interchange not far from the Autry National Center. The complex includes seven (7) fields, a children's playground, restrooms and parking. Private adult and youth leagues are its primary users, but high schools also play and practice there. The fields are generally reserved in advance on a fee basis by permitted groups, but

¹³ See Appendix 3 hereto.

when not reserved are available to the public on a walk-up basis. In addition to the Ferraro Soccer Complex, soccer is played at the Griffith Park Recreation Center. Its recently refurbished synthetic turf field is available by permit or on a walk-up basis for adult games or two simultaneously played youth games. Spectator bleachers are located there and restrooms, parking and a children's play area are nearby.

2. Baseball

Adjacent to the Crystal Springs Group Picnic Area in Griffith Park is Pote Field, one of only two regulation size baseball fields in the municipal park system. Pote is available by permit only and is used primarily by Los Angeles City College and the Municipal Baseball Program. To a lesser extent, Pote is also used by private high schools and other groups and for motion picture filming. Its amenities include a scoreboard, bleachers, restrooms, a children's play area and parking. In Griffith Park's North Atwater area is a free walk-up field that can be used for pony league baseball, t-ball and softball. Its amenities include bleachers, restrooms, a children's play area and parking. On the Park's northwest side, at Lake Hollywood Park is a baseball area with a backstop that can be used on a free, walk-up basis for baseball and softball games. There is an additional baseball field at Griffith Park Boys Camp which is reserved for the use of children attending the Camp.

C. Court Sports Players

1. Tennis

Games are played, lessons are given daily, and tournaments are held six times a year at Griffith Park's twenty-seven (27) tennis courts. Griffith Park Recreation Center, located on the Park's southeastern side, features a facility with eleven (11) lighted courts (including a tournament court), all available to the public by paid reservation. The complex includes a Pro Shop where tennis lessons can be arranged. Restrooms, parking and a children's play area are located nearby. To the west, the Vermont Canyon tennis facility with twelve (12) tennis courts in a scenic setting is available to the public on a paid reservation basis. Tennis lessons can be arranged, and restrooms and parking are available at the site. In Griffith Park's Central area are four (4) free tennis courts open to the public on a free, walk-up basis. Six times a year, Griffith Park hosts tennis tournaments coordinated by the City in conjunction with various tennis associations.

2. Volleyball

Griffith Park's volleyball/badminton courts in the Crystal Springs and North Atwater areas are available on a free walk-up basis to players who bring their equipment. A volleyball court is also located at Griffith Park Boys Camp for the use of its children.

3. Basketball

Griffith Park has a free walk-up basketball court in its North Atwater area as well as a basketball court for the use of the children at Griffith Park Boys Camp.

D. Swimmers

The municipal plunge at the Griffith Park Recreation Center is the most visible pool in the City's park system, and is first in use in all classifications. In operation from the Saturday after Los Angeles Unified School District dismisses in the spring to Labor Day, it is open to children 18 and under free of charge and to adults for a nominal fee. In addition to group and individual swimming lessons, special programs offered by the facility include organized lap-swimming, aquacise, water polo, synchronized swimming, team diving and programs for seniors and the disabled. In addition to Griffith Park's public plunge, there are also pools at Hollywoodland Girls Camp and the Griffith Park Boys Camp for the use of the children attending the camps.

E. Campers

Since the time they were established in 1926, Griffith Park's overnight camps have offered close-in, supervised camping to the children of Los Angeles. In 2007, the Camps welcomed _____ children and family members. Griffith Park Boys Camp serves boys ages 6-17. Week-long resident camping is available in the summer months and during winter and spring holiday periods. Specially themed weekend camps are offered out of season, with sessions focused on sports, nature awareness, outdoor skills or mother/son and father/son bonding. Camp Hollywoodland offers young girls resident camping in the summer months and during spring holidays, as well as special parent/child and family getaway weekends. The facilities feature cabins, dining and assembly rooms, pools and sport areas. When not being used by programs of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the facilities are available for rent to organizations and groups.

VIII. VISITORS TO MUSEUMS AND ATTRACTIONS

A. Travel Town Transportation Museum And Los Angeles Live Steamers

Travel Town Transportation Museum is a free, family-friendly outdoor railway museum and recreational attraction that is enjoyed by approximately 350,000 visitors a year, including approximately 50,000 school children. In addition to its collection of historic locomotives, passenger cars and freight cars, Travel Town features a miniature train ride, picnicking amenities, a playground, a gift shop, and special birthday party/meeting cars available by special arrangement. Located adjacent to Travel Town is Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum. This is a

demonstration railroad in miniature, offering the public free rides on scale-model steam trains, and public tours of the historic Walt Disney Barn.

B. Griffith Observatory

Griffith Observatory provides the citizens of Los Angeles with free information on astronomy and related sciences, and a chance to observe the planets through its great telescope. Approximately twenty percent (20%) of its 1.7 million visitors per year are tourists who arrive in groups or school children on conducted visits. The 1935 landmark building has just completed a major renovation and expansion that more than doubled the public space, while maintaining the historic look and feel of the building. Friends of the Observatory (FOTO), the 2,000-member non-profit organization established to support and promote the Griffith Observatory, played a lead role in its renovation.

C. The Greek Theatre

The Greek Theatre, an historic 5,700-seat concert venue, is owned by the City of Los Angeles and is currently managed, operated and promoted by Nederlander-Greek, Inc. In 2007 it welcomed 292,003 visitors to 76 events, and hosted three community graduations. In addition to performances under the stars, for the enjoyment of its ticket holders the venue operates multiple food and beverage concessions and has recently installed a number of box seats for table dining. Ticket prices vary by artist. Paid stacked parking is available on site for 2,800 to 3,000 cars.

D. Symphony in the Glen

Since 1994, some 60,000 people have attended Symphony in the Glen concerts in Griffith Park which are held in cooperation with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks on the rolling picnic lawn at the Old Zoo. Performances are provided free of charge to make whole-family attendance possible. On average, young children are nearly a third of the audience. The professional 50-piece orchestra performs twilight concerts (6:00 - 8:00 p.m.) on various Sundays throughout the summer. Attendees are encouraged to bring a meal. Parking is available at nearby lots, or concert-goers can shuttle to the location.

E. Greater Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens

In 1912, the City's Parks Department established the nucleus of a Zoo in a small canyon near the Park Central area of Griffith Park. Over the years, the Zoo's collection expanded, and by the mid-1950s, it was clear that the facility had outgrown its location. In 1966, under the aegis of the Recreation and Parks Department, the Zoo moved to its current site on 110 acres near the river. In 1997, The Greater Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens became a separate Department of the City of Los Angeles. Annually, the Zoo has more than 1 million paid visitors to its exhibits, cafés and shops. Its grounds feature more than one dozen venues that can be rented for private parties, galas, conferences and other special events. Free public parking is readily available in its 2,600-space lot and that lot is used by both Zoo and general Park visitors. Zoo employees park in a card-accessed lot.

F. Autry National Center

The Autry National Center, a privately operated museum, is located on 12.75 acres of Griffith Park land leased to the occupant by a City Council-created Board of Referred Powers in 1987. Annually, the Autry National Center welcomes approximately 180,000 paid visitors to its exhibits on the American West's history and culture, café, shop and theater. The Center also features special-event venues that can be rented for private parties, meetings and other special activities. Free parking for Autry visitors only is available in its 297-space lot. Currently, the Center is proposing an expansion of approximately 129,000 square feet to improve the exhibition of its collection, provide room for the collection it acquired when it merged with the Southwest Museum in 2003 and expand facilities for the study of the American West.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PLANT AND ANIMAL WORLD

I. INTRODUCTION

A major goal of this [Master-Vison](#) Plan is to maintain the natural wildlife environment in the Park consistent with an Urban Wilderness Identity. The natural beauty of the Park is apparent in its seasonal changes. After winter rains, seasonal streams appear in its canyons. In the spring, scores of native wildflowers come into bloom, and by April, mustard grows to shoulder height. With summer comes an apparent die-off: the Park's green hillsides turn gold, then fade to dun. In winter, the Park's native shrubs are laden with berries, and after new rains, the cycle begins again. The Park's fauna - its mammals, insects, amphibians, reptiles and birds - are adapted to and dependent on these cycles. Preservation and enhancement of the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity requires that all environments of the Park be managed to preserve and enhance its wild nature. In recognition of its vital importance, UCLA has designated Griffith Park as a Significant Ecological Area (SEA). Changes or improvements to both the built and natural environment must be accomplished in a manner that is integrated functionally and aesthetically with the Urban Wilderness Identity, [with particular care given to the identified Wilderness Area](#).

II. THE EXISTING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

A. Global Perspective

The Park is located in the easternmost part of the Santa Monica Mountain Range and enjoys a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and mild winters characterized by low amounts of rainfall. This type of climate is found in only four other areas of the world: covering in total a mere 2.2 percent of the earth's land surface area.¹⁴ Yet, within these distinct ecosystems, scientists find twenty percent (20%) of all known plant species. Ecologists now have sounded the alarm that Mediterranean habitats are being lost at a rate exceeding that of tropical rain forests, with only one acre being protected for every eight acres being lost. California has taken the lead in the protection of its Mediterranean habitat, and scientists are

¹⁴ Nature Conservancy, Conference on Mediterranean Habitats, Monterey, California, March 2007

encouraging other countries to conserve these ecosystems rather than lose them to development and agriculture.

B. The Park Setting

The Park has two major watersheds divided by a single ridge traversing the Park from northwest to southeast, parallel to Vista Del Valle Drive. Elevations range from approximately 384 to 1,625 feet above mean sea level, with Mount Hollywood as the highest peak.¹⁵ The topography drops from the ridge, with steep and gentle slopes and canyons transitioning to flatter areas including the L.A. River flood plain on the north.¹⁶

The northern watershed contains at least 20 smaller watersheds that collect and divert rainfall to canyon areas. Watersheds to the north have remained relatively undisturbed, with the exception of the base of the watershed near the Old Zoo, leading to Bee Rock, portions of Camp Road and the Toyon Canyon Landfill.

The southern watershed is also composed of ridges and canyons that create at least 20 smaller watersheds that collect and divert rainfall water to Vermont Canyon, the Bird Sanctuary, Fern Dell Road, Canyon Drive (which has the most significant riparian habitat in the Park) and areas to the west of Canyon Drive. With the exception of paved areas such as the Bird Sanctuary and Fern Dell Drive, which tend to accelerate water flow, the watersheds to the south are relatively unaltered. The construction of a channel for the Los Angeles River, the placement of the 134 Freeway and Interstate 5 at the Park's edges, and the buildings and facilities in the Park have, however, altered the Park's terrain.

Griffith Park has two distinct kinds of soil: the Tujunga-Soboba and the San Andreas-San Benito. The Tujunga-Soboba soil is very well drained, coarse, sandy loam, up to 60 inches deep, on alluvial fans with 0 to 5 percent slopes from sea level to 3,700 feet. This soil has a low runoff and erosion potential due to its quick absorption properties. This soil is of low natural fertility and typically supports grasses, forbs (herbaceous plants) and areas of brush. Tujunga-Soboba soil is found in the extreme northern portion of the Park along the Los Angeles River (flood

¹⁵ See Appendix 22a hereto.

¹⁶ See Appendix 22c and 22d hereto.

plain), near the Headworks and the Los Angeles Zoo.

The San Andreas-San Benito soil is well-drained, sandy, clay loam up to 48 inches deep on steep slopes with grades from 30 to 75 percent between 200 to 1,500 feet in elevation. These deposits overlay sandstone or shale that is relatively fine-grained, but often excludes plant roots except in joints. This association has a moderate-to-high runoff and erosion potential because of the slope. These soils are of moderate-to-high natural fertility and typically support wildlife and vegetation. The San Andreas-San Benito soil is found in the Park wherever the soil is not Tujunga-Soboba.

C. The Park Vegetation (Flora)¹⁷

Ten thousand to 20,000 years ago, following human occupation of the region, man-made fires caused chaparral to become the most widespread plant community in the Park and vicinity because chaparral readily regenerates after fires. Over the past 200 years, European and other non-native grasses were planted for livestock grazing. The introduction of these non-native grasses and weeds led to the ultimate disappearance of native grasses from the Park. Since the Park became City property, management of the vegetation has included planting other non-native species, including pine, eucalyptus, silk oak, lawns and golf course greens as well as horticultural shrubs and trees.

Areas of the Park are devoid of vegetation due to grading or other activities that have substantially modified the original topography and environment of the area. These areas include Toyon Canyon Landfill, Headworks, the composting facility and the various areas in the Park used for maintenance storage and work.

In the rest of the Park, there are at least eight different types of plant communities that have been identified and mapped.¹⁸ Each of these eight contains native Southern California and non-native species. The Park boasts rare native chaparral species such as Nevin's Barberry and showy natives such as matilija poppies and prickly pear. The Nevin's Barberry has been given Special Species status.

The Oak-Walnut Woodland areas, comprising coast live oaks and Southern California black walnut, are generally found on slopes and elevations above high-use

¹⁷ See Appendix 2 hereto.

¹⁸ See Appendix 22e hereto.

areas and have not been substantially impacted by recreational activities. This plant community type is found in various locations in the Park, usually on north and east facing slopes.

Oak Woodlands are generally found on north-facing slopes surrounded by steep terrain. In these areas, coast live oaks mix with lower-lying toyon and California blackberry. Non-native invasive species, such as the California fan palm and the castor bean, sometimes grow in the Oak Woodland areas.

The Oak-Sycamore Riparian vegetation grows along creeks and moist areas in the lower elevations of the Park including Canyon Drive and Fern Dell Canyon, and smaller canyons such as those above the Merry-Go-Round and the Old Zoo. A mix of coast live oaks, western sycamores and Mexican elderberry trees is typical of this plant community. Non-native invasive species such as castor bean and giant reed can also be found. The Oak-Sycamore areas have been impacted by people and recreational uses.

The Santa Monica Mountains have no naturally occurring pine forests. The Pine areas of the Park are all comprised of trees that have been introduced. A variety of pine species is represented, but most large stands are Canary Island Pine. The largest pine areas are adjacent to the Greek Theatre and the Griffith Observatory. In most of these areas, the understory consists of the Mixed Chaparral plant community.

Mixed Chaparral is the most widespread plant community in the Park. It occurs in a nearly uniform canopy of chamise and toyon on north-facing slopes, yet is sparser on steeper slopes. On lower slopes, it is interspersed with non-native trees. Because of its dense canopy, except for official and non-official trails, the areas of Mixed Chaparral are relatively undisturbed by Park visitors and recreation. The Mixed Chaparral coexists with mixed scrub, ruderal and non-native landscaped communities, and occasionally supports non-native planted trees such as pine and silk oak.

Mixed Scrub is the second most widespread plant community in the Park, occurring in scattered patches. It is dominated by coastal sagebrush, California buckwheat, California encelia and white sage, and in some areas supports several non-native species, including short-pod mustard, wild oats and tree tobacco. On lower slopes in the southern portion of the Park, the quality of Mixed Shrub has been degraded by visitors and recreation.

The ruderal, or weedy plant community is found throughout the Park, both

within patches of native plant communities and in areas that have been heavily disturbed by human use. It frequently borders ornamental landscape and mixed scrub communities. In the past, these areas likely supported grasslands, mixed scrub, mixed chaparral and riparian habitats. The weedy plant areas are typically dominated by non-native species such as short-pod mustard, Italian thistle, wild oats, tree tobacco, tocalote and annual sunflower.

Finally, Ornamental and Non-native Landscape areas occur within and near many of the high-use areas of the Park, including picnic areas, golf courses and roads. This broad category includes horticultural trees, shrubs and lawns. Some native trees exist, but many exotic trees, such as eucalyptus and redwoods, have been introduced.

All of these plant communities provide food and shelter for a diversity of wild creatures that make their dens, nests, burrows and hives in the Park.¹⁹

D. Mammals, Insects, Amphibians, Reptiles and Birds (Fauna)²⁰

1. Mammals

Mammals making their homes in the Park include deer, coyote, raccoon, red fox, grey fox, opossum, striped skunk, Beechy ground squirrel, various bat species and the non-native Eastern fox squirrel and house mouse. Bobcats have been observed in the northwest and eastern portions of the Park, and there have recently been sightings of a mountain lion that some believe may have incorporated Griffith Park into its range.

2. Insects

The last survey of insects in the Park was in spring 2003, a year with a cool late spring and the atypical spring may have influenced the survey results. Nonetheless, according to that survey, the most frequently observed butterfly was the gulf fritillary, which uses ornamental passion vines as a host plant. Bumblebees and honeybees were the most abundant bee species, although carpenter bees were also observed. Sand wasps were observed along some of the hiking trails where

¹⁹ See Appendix 25 hereto.

²⁰ See Appendix 1 hereto.

sandy patches are present. Scorpions, tarantulas and other spiders were commonly observed.

3. Amphibians and Reptiles

Amphibians in the Park include arboreal salamander, Pacific slender salamander, Pacific tree frog and California toad. Non-native amphibians found in many streams in the Park are the bullfrog and the African clawed frog. In addition to stream habitats, the Los Angeles River, on the Park's eastern side, provides abundant habitat for amphibians.

Reptiles identified in the Park include the western fence lizard, western skink, southern alligator lizard, California whiptail, side-blotched lizard, California legless lizard, California whipsnake, coachwhip, California kingsnake, ring-neck snake, gopher snake and western rattlesnake.

4. Birds

Ornithologists have identified 166 bird species in the Park. The Park is also an important stopover for migrating birds and provides an abundant habitat for wintering birds. Resident birds during a 2003 survey included the acorn woodpecker, American crow, Anna's hummingbird, Bewick's wren, bushtit, California towhee, California quail, California thrasher, common raven, European starling (non-native), great horned owl and red-tailed hawk. Migratory birds included the ash-throated flycatcher, black-chinned hummingbird, black-headed grosbeak and western wood pewee. Aquatic species such as herons, egrets, ducks and migrating geese can be found in the Los Angeles River as it flows through the Park. These species are also observed on golf course water features within the Park.

5. Special Status Species

Special status species are designated as such generally because of declining or limited population sizes resulting principally from loss of habitat. No wildlife species listed as threatened or endangered are known to exist in the Park, including butterflies and other insects. Other species known or suspected of being present in the Park have been designated California Species of Special Concern, including Cooper's hawk, loggerhead shrike, sharp-shinned hawk, southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, northern harrier, yellow warbler, San Diego horned lizard, south coast garter snake, San Diego desert woodrat and several bat species.

III. WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Wildlife corridors are patches of vegetation and topography that are bridges between suitable habitat for wildlife. Wildlife corridors are essential for maintaining genetic health and diversity for plants and animals. Without sufficient mix and diversity of genes within the population of a species, gene pools become limited and the species becomes genetically weak. If this occurs, that species may eventually disappear from that geographic area. Plant populations, as well as animals, benefit from genetic mixing through seeds carried by wildlife with wide-reaching ranges. Moreover, wildlife population imbalances, which inevitably occur in isolated ecosystems, can be remedied with the movement back and forth provided by wildlife corridors. Finally, wildlife corridors provide routes for avoiding the risk of road-kill and allow a safe means for escaping natural and man-made disasters, such as floods and fires.

In company with other reservoirs of native species surviving in Los Angeles County, such as the Santa Monica Mountains, Verdugo Mountains, San Gabriel Canyon and Joshua Tree Woodlands, the Educational Research Center of the University of California at Los Angeles has designated Griffith Park as a Significant Ecological Area (SEA). Griffith Park draws much of its importance as an SEA from its “greater than might be expected function” and role “as a corridor for any gene flow and species movement between the Santa Monica, San Gabriel, and Verdugo Mountains.”

Roads (especially freeways), urbanized space and other man-made impediments create “genetic barriers.” Griffith Park has become increasingly isolated from the rest of the Santa Monica Mountain Range, the Los Angeles River and the Los Angeles basin because of the freeways, concrete river projects and urbanization that surround it. Perhaps it was for this reason that the ringtail cat, a mammal related to the raccoon, has now disappeared from it.

Rivers can be wildlife corridors. River-bed vegetation is quickly returning to the Los Angeles River and should be encouraged to do so. Already, major bird and mammal populations exist on the re-vegetated portions of the River. Although some stretches of the River may not currently be suitable primary corridors, it is important to reinstate the Park’s connection to the Los Angeles River for the future.

The undisturbed natural areas in the northwest portion of the Park should remain as such given that adjoining land outside the Park is also an undisturbed corridor providing primary linkage westward on the Santa Monica Mountain Range. Secondary corridors within the Park are also essential. The Park should be free of fences and barriers limiting wildlife movement. To the extent possible, the periphery of the Park should allow for the unobstructed transition of wildlife to suitable habitats outside the Park.²¹

IV. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Manage the Natural Habitat of the Park to Maintain, Rehabilitate and Restore Existing Ecosystems in all natural Areas of the Park

1

1. Include in the full-time staff for the Park a properly educated, trained and experienced ecologist and a properly educated, trained and experienced forester/restoration specialist.
2. Educate and train all Park executives and staff about the Park's ecosystems, and strategies to preserve and protect its biological resources.
3. Identify all existing native species and take the steps necessary to continuously preserve native species.
4. Identify existing non-native species and develop a plan for possibly replacing such species with native species.
5. Encourage use of native plant species and prohibit new use of invasive non-native species in the Park, including in all areas held by lease-holders and concessionaires.
6. Identify unique biological resources for wildlife, and protect such areas by appropriate seasonal closure.
7. ~~Eliminate and prohibit use of the~~ Reduce the number of natural areas of the Park used

²¹

See Appendix 5, Appendix 6 and Appendix 16 hereto for descriptions of Headworks Spreading Grounds, Toyon Canyon and the North Atwater Creek Stream, where plans are being developed to ensure the areas provide for wildlife support and passage.

as temporary “lay down areas” for equipment and supplies, and restore ~~such unused~~ areas to their natural state.

8. Prohibit any further development within the existing ~~open Spaces~~wilderness area of the Park, as defined by the Historic Cultural Monument Application.

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9. Designate the Nevin’s Barberry mitigation site that was established as a result of the taking of the plant during the Griffith Observatory Restoration Project, located approximately 2.5 miles north of the Observatory off of the Toyon Trail on a north-facing slope at an elevation of 1,000 feet, as a Rare Plant Preserve.

B. Manage and Maintain Watersheds Within the Park to Support Aquatic Biodiversity and Riparian Habitat in the Park’s Watercourses and the Los Angeles River

1. Reduce and prevent pollutant discharges into the environment.
2. Break up the areas of impermeable surfacing, and replace with permeable surfaces to allow water infiltration.
3. Develop a naturalized drainage system of bioswales or riparian swales woven through ~~all~~-existing functions of the Park.

C. Manage the Rehabilitation of All Areas of the Park Consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity

1. Adhere to the previously developed Bureau of Sanitation Toyon Canyon Reclamation Plan for all work on and in that landfill and restore a stream in the landfill area.
2. Restore Headworks in such a manner as to (1) improve the habitat linkage between the Park and the L.A. River, (2) restore a vital seasonal wetlands area, (3) retain and treat surface water runoff within the watershed in a bioswale and (4) improve the quality of water that enters the Los Angeles River.
3. Restore and maintain the Bird Sanctuary as a natural

environment friendly to the Park's native bird species.
Line and pave the stream course with natural materials and rocks so that water is captured and erosion is avoided.
Install a small pumping system to ensure a continuous water source.

4. Restore and maintain Fern Dell consistent with its historic status, and install a small pumping system to ensure a continuous water source.
5. Make necessary changes and upgrades to meet environmental standards, enabling the golf courses in the Park to apply for and receive Audubon International certification.
6. [Work collaboratively with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Los Angeles County Flood Control to](#) Restore and maintain the Los Angeles River in Griffith Park consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity [and the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan.](#)

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D. Manage the Park Trails to Prevent Undesirable Impacts on Native Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat and Hillside

1. Close and prohibit unofficial trails and enforce the prohibition.
2. Re-sign official trails and upgrade such trails as necessary to minimize erosion.
3. Regularly maintain official trails.

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E. Acquire Additional Adjacent Open Space

1. Acquire land bordering the Park on the northwest.
2. Keep all acquired land that is in a natural state in that state.

F. Create, Restore and Maintain Wildlife Corridors

1. Restore a primary wildlife corridor between the Park and the Los Angeles River in the area of the Headworks by removing

fencing near the River and planting sycamores, oaks and native riparian shrubs. Culverts and land bridges should be considered for safe passage across Forest Lawn Drive, as well as other vehicular roads of the Park.²²

2. Manage ~~all~~ facilities within the Park so as not to impair natural secondary corridors.
3. Utilize ~~all-acquired-or-existing-space-in~~ the northwest area of the Park as a wildlife area with limited access by people so as to encourage the corridor westward on the Santa Monica Mountain Range.
4. Remove barriers, fencing and other impediments along the periphery of the Park to allow safe passage to outside natural areas, unless those barriers provide protection from hazards or channel wildlife to other areas where safe passage is possible.

²²

An illustration of the type of land bridge contemplated is attached hereto as Appendix 27.

CHAPTER FOUR

BUILT FACILITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

Buildings and design elements, built at various times with diverse themes and styles, particularly along the edges of the Park that are adjacent to urban development, present a variety of architecture. Many were built under the aegis of the 1930s Works Project Administration (WPA). The Greek Theatre, the Griffith Observatory, the Old Zoo, and Fern Dell, as well as WPA elements such as the stone curbs, ornamental baseball field bollards, fences and posts, typify the distinctiveness and excellence of Griffith Park structures and have become part of the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity. Yet not all structures in the Park attain these high standards, nor are maintenance and upkeep always done in a manner that continues these high standards.

The Park contains many examples of ecologically unsound architectural decision-making. With advances in ecology and environmental sensitivity, these mistakes need not be repeated. The Park can and should respond to increased demand for unspoiled habitat and enjoyment of nature.

Man-made structures need not be inconsistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity. Demonstrative of the ability of natural species to adapt for their survival, Griffith Park's built facilities simultaneously serve the needs of its native plant and animal inhabitants as well as people. The lives of many of its birds and mammals depend on the Los Angeles River. The banks and channels of this formerly natural river were covered with concrete as a result of the floods of 1938, but the River is still accessible through wildlife corridors. Deer bed down and bobcats hunt on the flat top of Toyon Landfill, a previously wild canyon in the interior of the Park. The Park's golf courses have been colonized heavily, providing water and nesting sites for birds, forage for deer, and hunting grounds for coyotes and raccoons. The Park's picnic areas function as wildlife corridors.

For these reasons, the care and management of the entire Park must be conducted in a manner consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity. This requires that changes, improvements, replacements, or construction of new facilities at any location in the Park, including the edges of the Park, be accomplished in a manner that is integrated functionally and aesthetically with an Urban Wilderness Identity. It means further that there must be a careful calibration between actual usage of the Park and the structures that are built on it. Superfluous buildings and structures should be eliminated, leaving more open space for recreation and enjoyment. New structures should be added only when supported by accurate statistics of actual use and a detailed analysis based on appropriate data of predicted usage~~demonstrated need~~. Finally, all structures should be aesthetically compatible with the Park's natural surroundings and wilderness character.²³

II. DEFINITION

Built facilities are those man-made structures in the Park. These include

²³ This Master-Vision Plan sets forth overall principles for the management and care of the Park with specific recommendations when sufficient information already exists to support those recommendations. ~~To demonstrate the difference in the approach taken between the Melendrez Draft and this Master Plan, attached to this document are several appendices summarizing what appears in the Melendrez Draft with regard to built facilities for the Park. Appendix 9 lists the facilities that are contained within the Melendrez Draft as new projects, Appendix 10 lists the facilities recommended by the Melendrez Draft for demolition and Appendix 11 lists the entryway structures proposed by the Melendrez Draft. Appendix 12 lists the parking structure and lot changes recommended by the Melendrez Draft.~~

physical buildings and developed recreational areas, such as tennis courts, as well as permanently installed devices to move people around the Park.²⁴

III. INVENTORY

²⁴ The structures excluded from discussion in this Chapter are any anticipated bus or tram shuttle stops and parking structures. Those structures are addressed in the Vehicular Access and Circulation Section.

Although there is currently no official inventory, it is estimated that there are more than 350 man-made structures in Griffith Park. These fall into roughly twelve categories, not including roads, bridges, parking lots and trails, which are discussed in the Mobility Chapter. These categories, which comprise everything from major visitor venues to sports fields, playgrounds, camps, cafés, maintenance buildings, developed picnic grounds and public restrooms, include more than one dozen destinations that consist of multiple, and in some cases, several score buildings and built features.²⁵

A. Restrooms

Restrooms are scattered throughout the Park.²⁶ Many are currently not functional; others are subject to continual damage. Some of the restrooms are located in accessible sites in the middle of the Park, while others are located at sites not easily accessible to the public. There is no consistent design for the facilities nor do they comport with current best practices for public restrooms. The Park currently lacks appropriately sited and designed restrooms of a type that can be easily maintained in a clean and sanitary manner.

Before relocating or building new restrooms, a needs study should be conducted to determine the number of restroom facilities required to serve the public using the Park on a typical week-end, and the locations of greatest need and use. Existing and new restroom facilities must meet all accessibility standards, including cubicles, and all restrooms should have passive solar hot water heating systems.²⁷ Restrooms should be located or remodeled as necessary to enhance, and not detract from, the aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity. In making decisions as to the location of restrooms, consideration must be given to preserving and protecting mobility, views, landscapes, security needs and erosion control.

²⁵ To the best of its capabilities, the Working Group has prepared an inventory of facilities which appears as Appendix 7. ~~Of course, t~~That inventory will need to be verified and amended as necessary before a Master Plan can be finalized.

²⁶ No accurate mapping of operational and non-operational restroom facilities within the Park currently exists. Nor does there exist any current needs assessment of the number, type and location of such facilities sufficient to meet the demands of Park users. No information has been provided as to the costs involved in maintaining the current, existing facilities in a useable, safe and sanitary manner.

²⁷ These systems require no electricity and minimal maintenance.

B. Meeting Rooms

Within the Park, there are currently at least ten different venues with meeting room space. All of the existing meeting rooms, including the meeting room available at the Ranger Station, are on a fee-for-use basis. The location of existing meeting rooms includes:

- two spaces at the Griffith Park Golf Clubhouse;
- two railroad cars at Travel Town;
- at least six different indoor and outdoor spaces at the Los Angeles Zoo;
- classrooms, a theater and other spaces at the Autry National Center;
- a hospitality room at the Greek Theatre;
- classrooms, a conference room and other spaces at the renovated Griffith Observatory;
- approximately twelve meeting rooms of various capacities at the Equestrian Center; and
- space and rooms at Friendship Auditorium, Griffith Park Camp, Camp Hollywoodland and the Ranger Station.²⁸

²⁸

This information comes from inventory information provided by Recreation and Parks during February 2006, and information independently obtained by the Working Group members. At Griffith Park Golf Clubhouse, there is a restaurant with a 60 to 100 person capacity and a banquet hall with a 100 to 300 person capacity. The railroad cars at Travel Town can accommodate 40 persons each. The Los Angeles Zoo has a variety of locations with capacities ranging from 20 to 2,000 people. The Autry has spaces for rent that accommodate up to 400 people, as well as classrooms for 35 to 70 people and a theater with a 270-person capacity. The hospitality room at the Greek Theatre can accommodate 225 people and Friendship Auditorium can accommodate 400 to 500 people. Griffith Park Camp has a capacity of 150 people and Camp Hollywoodland has capacity of 180 people. The Visitor Center at the Ranger Station can

accommodate 99 people. The Equestrian Center publicizes that it has 13,000 square feet of multi-use event space for weddings, conferences, specialty banquets, fund raisers and company picnics. In addition to the Grand Prix Ballroom which can be broken up into smaller rooms, there is the Equestrian Ballroom and the Equidome. There are also four developed outside areas for open-air meetings and events: Equestrian Terrace, Cricket Field, Hunt Field and White House and Garden Courtyard. The renovated Griffith Observatory has seven different spaces with capacity for 947 people. Outside rental usage may be offered for a conference room, classrooms, the East Terrace and the Roof for a total accommodation of 247 people. Rental of any space will be subject to the Observatory programming schedule.

Given the range of meeting rooms currently available within the Park and the vacancy rate of those rooms, there is currently no apparent need for adding structures to the Park to provide more meeting rooms. Consistent with preserving the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity, when they are managed and coordinated effectively and in keeping with the purposes of the Park, existing facilities would appear to meet the need for meeting rooms within the Park.

C. Visitor Centers and Ranger Stations

Currently, a Visitor Center and Ranger Station complex serves the public at Crystal Springs. A small auditorium and shaded outdoor area are a part of this complex. Additionally, to meet the need for timely Ranger response in that area of the Park, Recreation and Parks owns and maintains a Ranger house inhabited by a Park Ranger in the Fern Dell section of the Park.

The Los Feliz Adobe is an historical structure located in Crystal Springs that was an original Rancho Los Feliz home. It must be preserved and utilized in a manner consistent with best-practice uses for such historical structures. With the assistance of individuals trained and experienced in the public use of historical structures, provision should be made for the Los Feliz Adobe to complement the recently improved Visitor Center. Landscaping should be restored to natural vegetation and the tropical plant overgrowth on the west side of the Adobe should be removed.

Many employees of Recreation and Parks are currently housed in Crystal Springs, either in the Los Feliz Adobe, its adjoining buildings or modular structures across from Pote Field. The presence of all of these employees and the modular structures that house them takes up open space within Crystal Springs and detracts from the Urban Wilderness Identity. Consistent with good management practices, an analysis ~~must~~ should be undertaken of which positions must be retained in Crystal Springs to meet the needs of the Park and its visitors, and which positions can be moved to a location less central to the Park. For example, the Film Office serves a selected audience rather than the general public and does not need to be located in the high-usage area of Crystal Springs. Positions that are not essential to serving the general public should be relocated to other areas such as the Central Services Yard and thereby free up more open space for Park visitors within Crystal Springs. The historical and cultural nature of the Los Feliz Adobe and the surrounding landscape should be brought into focus in the Crystal Springs area.

D. Recreational and Cultural Structures

In addition to the swimming pools (also called plunges) and built picnic areas that exist within the Park, there are currently seventeen recreational and cultural sites within the Park that range from one to many structures.²⁹ Of those seventeen sites, nine either have a Master Plan or leasehold arrangement unique to that particular facility.³⁰ For example, while the Greek Theatre is not identified as having

²⁹ Those structures include: Train Ride, Pony Rides, Tregnan Golf Academy, Los Feliz Golf Course, Merry-Go-Round, Wilson-Harding Golf Complex, Los Angeles Zoo, Autry National Center, Travel Town, Los Angeles Live Steamers, Los Angeles Equestrian Center, Martinez Arena, Griffith Park Boys Camp, Camp Hollywoodland, Greek Theatre, Roosevelt Golf Course and Griffith Observatory.

³⁰ The existence of individual master plans appears to be the result of an historical practice rather than a considered approach fully reviewed and approved by any arm of City government. The venues that have historically had individual master plans include: Los Feliz Golf Course, Wilson-Harding Golf Complex, Los Angeles Zoo, Autry National Center, Los Angeles Live Steamers, Travel Town, Los Angeles Equestrian Center, Roosevelt Golf Course and Griffith Observatory. Separate and apart from the Park Master Plan, the Headworks area of the Park is also undergoing its own development and design process through the Department of Water and Power as an available site to replace the Silverlake and Ivanhoe

a separate Master Plan, improvements and changes to that recreational facility have historically been negotiated at the time of its leasehold renewal.

The existence of individual Master Plans for nine separate areas of the Park, areas that constitute substantial acreage in the Park, presents [problems-a challenge](#) for developing a cohesive, uniform Griffith Park Master Plan. It also results in conflicting proposals with regard to the use of particular acreage within the Park. To ensure that work within the Park is consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity and that the needs of all recreational areas of the Park are identified and addressed, the Master Plan process must identify any conflicts or inconsistencies between the Master Plan and the individual venue master plans, and develop a mechanism for resolving those conflicts that is consistent with the aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity.

reservoirs. It is essential that restoration activities in the Park preserve the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park. Particular attention must be given to the protection of wildlife corridors as well as native bird and wildlife species and the restoration of, and provision for, open spaces.

No existing, valid analysis exists as to whether or not there is a need for additional or expanded recreational facilities or venues within the Park.³¹ There is also no existing study of whether or not there is a need for additional cultural structures within the Park.³² The existing facilities should be managed and maintained in such a manner as to enhance the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity and all improvements, changes, additions, or other structural changes of any type, including signage, to any of the recreational facilities or venues, should be subject to

³¹ A 2004 survey conducted by students under the auspices of California State University Northridge, which asked a series of prepared questions of Park visitors at certain locations within the Park, is attached hereto as Appendix 3. The document describes the methodology utilized and summarizes what it reports as the results of questions posed to visitors to the Park on the days the survey was conducted. Among those individuals to whom the questions were posed during the survey, there was no felt need for more recreational or cultural structures within the Park. ~~That sentiment was also expressed by those who attended the Public Workshops held on the Melendrez Draft in June 2003.~~

³² There are several Cultural-Historical Landmarks in the Park. Those include: (1) The Hollywood Sign, (2) William Mulholland Fountain, (3) Walt Disney Barn at Live Steamers, (4) 'Little Nugget' Railcar at Travel Town, (5) Los Feliz Adobe, (6) Griffith Observatory, (7) Griffith Merry-Go-Round, (8) Old Zoo, and (9) Fern Dell. Additionally, Griffith Park in its entirety has been designated as a Historic Cultural Monument, with additional features within the Park identified as character defining contributing elements.

the design elements of ~~the this Park's Master Plan~~. Due to the designation of Griffith Park as an Historic Cultural Monument, most alterations to existing structures will require review by the City's Office of Historic Resources. Recreation and Parks should avoid entering into any lease, or approving any individual facility Master Plan that would permit the leaseholder or facility to deviate from protecting and preserving the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park or negatively impacting the natural environment of the Park as well as the mobility, views, wildlife corridors or landscaping of the Park.

E. Developed Picnic Areas

There are at least ten developed picnic areas within the Park.³³ Any addition to, or change of, the existing picnic areas should be preceded by an analysis of the current use made of existing picnic areas, with particular attention paid to days of high-impact usage and ways in which the needs on those days can be managed without a need to encumber existing open space for additional developed picnic areas.

All picnic areas should be managed to protect the natural environment and natural open space quality of the area in which they are located, and improve the aesthetic quality of the area. Where appropriate and feasible, invasive exotic plant materials should be removed from the areas and replaced with native plantings that can prevent erosion and provide maintainable landscaping. Where necessary, such as in Fern Dell, landscaping and historic features should be restored. Daily attention to the landscaping and grounds of built picnic areas is important for maintaining the character of the Urban Wilderness Identity.

F. Plunges

There are three plunges (swimming pools) within the Park: the Municipal

³³ Central Park Area, Old Zoo, Shane's Inspiration, Crystal Springs, Mineral Wells, Fern Dell, Bette Davis, Pecan Grove, Vermont Canyon, Bronson Canyon. In addition to these major areas, there are tables at the Lower Old Zoo and Upper Old Zoo areas, the Pony and Train Ride, and the Live Steamers. As of January 9, 2006, the Working Group was able to identify 510 existing picnic tables.

Plunge at Los Feliz Boulevard and Riverside Drive, the pool at Griffith Park Boys Camp and the pool at Camp Hollywoodland. The pool at Los Feliz Boulevard is in operation from the Saturday after schools close in June until Labor Day. It is open to children 18 and under free of charge and to adults for a nominal fee. The Los Feliz Pool offers group and individual swimming lessons and various specialized programs such as aquacise and team diving, and programs for seniors and the disabled.

The pools at Camp Hollywoodland and Griffith Park Boys Camp are for the use of children attending the camps and are not open to the general public.

The Municipal Plunge at Los Feliz Boulevard is an historic structure built in 1927 that should be preserved. Consistent with retaining the historical buildings within the Park and its natural setting, the Municipal Plunge should be maintained in its current configuration.

G. Sports Fields and Courts³⁴

As set forth in Chapter Two, The Human Dimension, there are a variety of sports fields within the Park.³⁵ There is no existing ~~valid~~ analysis of how often and when each field or court is in use, the number of people or teams unable to make reservations or obtain use of the existing fields and courts, or the need for more courts and fields within the Park ~~as opposed to surrounding communities that may lack recreational facilities~~. Before moving, adding to or ~~in any way~~ changing the number or location of existing fields and courts, such an analysis should be completed. The analysis should include a review of the needs of the overall park system.³⁶ Any changes that are made to the facilities within the Park should be consistent with the findings and conclusion of such an analysis. If changes, additions, or relocation are undertaken within the Park, all field and court areas should be landscaped in a manner consistent with the natural aspects of the Urban Wilderness Identity and be located in such a manner as to minimize intrusion on open space, views and wildlife corridors.

³⁴ For a full discussion of the recreational users of the Park, reference is made to Chapter Two, The Human Dimension.

³⁵ See Appendix 3 for the results of the survey conducted by California State University Northridge. At the time the survey was taken, approximately five percent (5%) of the people surveyed were engaged in field and court sports while in the Park.

³⁶ See Appendix 18 hereto.

1. Field Sports

a. Soccer

In 1992, twenty-six (26) acres of the Park were set aside to create the Ferraro Soccer Complex located near the Golden State and Ventura Freeway Interchange. That complex provides seven (7) soccer fields, which are used primarily by private adult and youth leagues but also by high schools. The fields are reserved in advance on a fee basis by permitted groups, and when not reserved, are available on a walk-up basis.

The field at the Griffith Park Recreation Center was recently refurbished with synthetic turf. It is available by permit or on a walk-up basis for adult games. The field also provides space for two youth games to be played simultaneously.

b. Baseball

Pote Field is adjacent to the Crystal Springs Group Picnic Area. It is one of only two regulation-size baseball fields in the City's municipal park system. It is available by permit only and is currently used primarily by Los Angeles City College and the Municipal Baseball program.

In the North Atwater area of the Park, there is a free walk-up field that can be used for pony league baseball, t-ball and softball. There is also at Lake Hollywood Park a baseball area with a backstop that can be used on a free, walk-up basis for baseball and softball games. The baseball field at Griffith Park Boys Camp is currently reserved for use by the children attending the Camp.

c. Golf

The first city-owned public golf course was established in the Park in 1914. Over the years, golf became increasingly popular and now approximately nine percent (9%) of the Park land is devoted to golf courses. There are more than 200,000 rounds of golf played annually on the five courses now housed at Griffith Park.³⁷

³⁷ Wilson-Harding Golf Complex, two 18-hole courses; Roosevelt 9-hole executive course, Los Feliz 9-hole course, Tregnan Junior Golf Academy.

The Wilson-Harding Complex includes a driving range and a pro shop. Lessons are available as are cart rentals. Tregnan [Gold Golf](#) Academy has a 3-hole teaching course and a driving range, as well as a clubhouse and classroom for teaching children the principles of the game.

2. Court Sports

a. Tennis

There are twenty-seven tennis courts,³⁸ all of which, with the exception of the courts at Crystal Springs Drive, charge a fee for usage. The eleven lighted courts at the Griffith Park Recreation Center are all available to the public by paid reservation. There are twelve courts at Vermont Canyon that are also available to the public on a paid reservation basis. There are four free tennis courts open to the public on a walk-up basis in the Park's Central area. Approximately six times a year, the Park hosts tennis tournaments that are coordinated by the City in conjunction with various tennis associations.

b. Volleyball

There are volleyball/badminton courts in the Crystal Springs and North Atwater areas that are available on a free walk-up basis to players who bring their own equipment. There is also a volleyball court at Griffith Park Boys Camp for the use of the children attending the Camp.

c. Basketball

There is a free walk-up basketball court in the North Atwater area as well as a court at Griffith Park Boys Camp for use by the children attending the Camp.

H. Restaurants and Food Concessions

³⁸ Riverside Drive Tennis Center, Vermont Canyon Tennis Courts, Park Center Tennis Courts

There are currently eleven locations in the Park with food and beverage service.³⁹ As a general principle, food facilities should be kept to a minimum and located so as to afford easy access and minimal impact to the Park environment. The number and location of all food service concessions, whether restaurants or mobile or permanent kiosks, should be determined by a comprehensive Park-wide analysis of user groups. All food facilities should be designed consistent with the aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity so that they blend into the natural and native environment of the Park.

I. Water Tanks

There are currently seventeen water tanks in Griffith Park.⁴⁰ Of those seventeen tanks, four are currently out of service. As part of the Griffith Park Water System Project, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)⁴¹ is planning to abandon five existing tanks, rehabilitate two tanks and install two new

³⁹ These are: (1) Autry National Center Cafeteria, (2) Greater Los Angeles Zoo Food Concessions, (3) Wilson/Harding Golf Course Coffee Shop, (4) Roosevelt Golf Course Café, (5) Eatz Coffee Shop, (6) Griffith Observatory Food Services, (7) Travel Town Snack Stand, (8) Western Canyon Cappuccino and Snack Stand, (9) Greek Theatre Concessions, (10) Los Angeles Equestrian Center Concessions, and (11) Pony Ride Snack Stand. The individuals interviewed for the California State University Northridge survey indicated no felt need for additional food facilities. ~~Individuals participating in the Public Workshops held in June 2003 also indicated no interest in additional food services within the Park.~~

⁴⁰ See Appendix 26 hereto.

⁴¹ On April 19, 2005, the Los Angeles City Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the LADWP and the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks transferring ownership of selected water system facilities in the Park to LADWP. Among other things, the MOU provides that any facility not transferred to LADWP, but currently in service, will continue to be operated by and maintained by LADWP at no cost to Recreation and Parks until such time that the LADWP notifies Recreation and Parks in writing that the facility is no longer required and will be abandoned. Upon receipt of such notice, it is the sole responsibility of Recreation and Parks to determine and execute the proper disposition of the abandoned facility. LADWP is obligated to maintain all existing and new tanks in such a manner as to achieve the water quality standards set forth by the California Department of Health Services and consistent with other LADWP tanks.

tanks. At an earlier stage of the project, LADWP installed two new tanks, the Los Feliz Tank with a capacity of 750,000 gallons and Tank 111 with a capacity of 100,000 gallons. When LADWP completes the Griffith Park Water System Project, there will be ten operable tanks within the Park.

In March of 2006, construction began on the Travel Town Tank. That tank has a capacity of 750,000 gallons and provides domestic, irrigation and emergency water supply to the western areas of the Park, including Travel Town, the Composting Facility and the Los Angeles Zoo Animal Health Center. It also provides a source of water for higher elevations in the Park. In the planning stages is construction of an additional new tank with a 300,000-gallon capacity. This tank is currently referred to as the "1217 foot tank" and will provide domestic, irrigation and emergency supply to the central areas of the Park. The tank is also planned to provide a water source for higher elevations in the Park.

Careful coordination between Recreation and Parks and LADWP should take place with regard to the location selected for any new tanks constructed within the Park, so that the location is consistent with preserving the natural character of the Urban Wilderness Identity and protecting mobility, landscaping, wildlife corridors and views.

Removing abandoned water tanks, which is the sole responsibility of Recreation and Parks, will restore some areas of the Park in a manner consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity, increase open space and improve views and mobility within the Park. The Department of Recreation and Parks has not removed a water tank for at least fifteen years, largely because of the expense incurred as a result of the toxic materials that must be removed. While the current thinking seems to be that it is cheaper to maintain the abandoned tanks than to remove them, ~~such an approach simply ignores a problem that will never go away~~ it may be time to review this policy. A detailed analysis should be undertaken so that an ecologically and environmentally sound policy for the abandoned water tanks consistent with the preservation of the Park's natural areas can be developed. The final policy should address the manner and timing of the removal of the tanks and the manner in which the tanks are to be maintained and utilized pending their removal.

J. Utilities

Power and communications lines and poles are visible throughout the Park and negatively impact the Park environment, scenic views and vistas. To eradicate this negative impact, all aboveground utilities should be placed underground. This

should be a priority item and coordinated with the appropriate utility companies.⁴²

K. Miscellaneous Recreational Facilities

Throughout the Park, there are recreational facilities that do not easily fit into one of the previously identified categories. Included within such facilities are those that are listed below. Before making any changes or additions to a building or facility, an analysis should be undertaken as to the need for such changes or additions and all such changes or additions should be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with preserving the Urban Wilderness Identity.

1. Griffith Park Dog Park

This is an area of approximately 31,150 square feet in which dogs may run off leash.

2. Martinez Arena

This is an arena located near Travel Town that serves horseback riders of modest means to school and ride their horses. It is free to individual users and is also rented to organizations for horse shows and other equestrian events for a nominal fee.

3. North Atwater Equestrian Arena

Located in the North Atwater area of the Park, this arena is used in a fashion similar to the use made of Martinez Arena.

4. Playgrounds

There are at least eight developed playgrounds in the Park, including the universally accessible “Shane’s Inspiration.”

⁴²

There should also be an analysis conducted of alternative sources of energy that can be utilized in the Park in an environmentally appropriate manner.

5. Zoo Magnet School and Recreation Center Pre-school

Both of these schools are housed in buildings on the grounds of the Park.

6. Senior Center

During the time this draft [Master Vision](#) Plan was being written, Recreation and Parks relocated the Senior Center that was previously housed at the Silver Lake Recreation Center to modular buildings in the parking lot of Friendship Auditorium.

IV. MAINTENANCE AND MAINTENANCE AREAS

A. Maintenance

Preservation and maintenance of the Park's existing open spaces and facilities should be a high priority. When preservation and maintenance falter, landscaping, such as in Fern Dell, quickly disappears and- may be replaced with invasive non-native plants and trees. Buildings take on an unused ~~and decrepit~~ appearance and become targets for vandalism and further damage. Open spaces collect discarded trash and other debris. The Park generally takes on a worn look inconsistent with a vibrant and alive Urban Wilderness.

All planning for the Park should include as a first priority the type and costs of maintenance required to keep the Park a vibrant, natural setting. Before constructing, adding to or changing facilities, attention should be given to the maintenance costs involved in maintaining the facility and, given those costs [relative to the costs of maintaining the existing system](#), whether or not the facility can reasonably be maintained in such a manner as to be appropriately integrated into a natural setting consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

B. Maintenance Areas

There are eight⁴³ "permanent" service yards and maintenance areas within the

⁴³ Central Service Yard, Griffith Golf Service Yard, Roosevelt Golf Service Yard, Tregnan Golf Academy Service Yard, Commonwealth Nursery, Western Canyon Yard, Park Center and Pettigrew Ranger Service Yard.

Park. In addition, on an as-needed basis, Park areas have become “lay down areas” for purposes of providing ~~what is asserted to be only~~ temporary storage of equipment and material for current or future projects.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ There is an ongoing discussion as to how many temporary lay down areas are in use at the time this Draft is being written. Historically, various areas of the Park have been used as temporary lay down areas, including the north extension of the Pony Ride overflow parking area, above the helipad on Vista Del Valle, west of the Maintenance Yard on Zoo Drive, the large field south of the Martinez Arena, across from Composting Facility/Griffith Park Drive, Poly Wog and Western Canyon’s West Trail area.

In conflict with other information received from the Department of Recreation and Parks, during a tour conducted by the Maintenance Superintendent, it was stated that only the Pony Ride area is a “lay down area.” Although trash has accumulated there in the past (even just recently), it is the current policy to use this area only for temporary storage of sand, earth, concrete, asphalt and other reusable earthen materials. Recycled water is readily available at this site to mitigate dust pollution. It was also stated that all other areas identified in the first part of this footnote are now considered open areas. The statement from the

The eight permanent facilities take up approximately 53 acres of Park land. ~~The locations for the permanent facilities appear to be more historical than planned and related to what land was available rather than to a thorough analysis of how to best manage the service yard needs of the Park.~~ Moreover, the Central Service Yard on West Chevy Chase Drive comprises 31 acres and provides space and services for both Griffith Park and the Metro Region of Recreation and Parks, as well as for other Departments of City government unrelated to Park activities. It also provides storage for five and ten yard dump trucks, Bob Cat tractors and other large equipment as well as storage for playground sand, rock and gravel for concrete, chain link fence and project-oriented building supplies.

A large amount of Park acreage is currently utilized for service yards, maintenance areas and lay down areas. To reduce the number of acres used in this manner, Park maintenance facilities ~~need to~~ should be consolidated. Such consolidation ~~will~~ would provide for efficiency and provide ~~additional~~ recreational areas consistent with the needs of the greater Los Angeles community. Maintenance areas should be relocated out of view of Park visitors so that they do not detract from the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park.

Space originally intended to be used on a temporary basis, such as the area north of the overflow lot at the Pony Ride, sometimes ~~seems to become~~ is more permanent ~~than temporary~~ when equipment and supplies sit ~~untouched~~ for months at a time. A careful review should be undertaken of the actual amount of maintenance area needed for Griffith Park as well as a review of why Griffith Park space should be utilized as a general Recreation and Parks storage area. ~~As with much of what has happened to Griffith Park in the past, as a ready open space resource, it appears functions and activities are moved into that open space with little or no regard for the need to preserve the natural, open space of the Park. To have an effective Park Master Plan, this ad hoc manner of decision-making will need to be curtailed.~~ Decisions made regarding using Park space for maintenance and storage will need to take into consideration, and be consistent with, the Urban

representative of the Department Recreation and Parks was that only one lay down area is needed within the Park, and that an acceptable alternative location for the Pony Ride area would be the area across from the Composting Facility.

Wilderness Identity.

C. Central Service Yard Opportunity Site

The rediscovery of Central Service Yard as dedicated parkland presents an extraordinary opportunity to expand both active and passive recreational enjoyment of Griffith Park without the prohibitively expensive purchase of new parkland and without displacing current users.

Through analysis of boundary maps and other records, the Real Estate Division of the Recreation and Parks Department determined in the Fall of 2006 that the approximately 28-acre riverfront parcel of land contiguous to the North Atwater Park section of Griffith Park is and always has been dedicated parkland. The land was once recognized as a part of Griffith Park and used for recreational purposes.

Today, this parcel is not used for recreation and is inaccessible to park-goers. It is the site of a permanent building housing Recreation and Parks regional offices and several maintenance sheds and workshops serving the Recreation and Parks Department and other City departments. The site also has several portable buildings that function as offices for the recreation division, a large employee parking lot, fleet vehicle parking and storage areas, and other non-recreational uses.

By eliminating the non-park-specific functions currently in Central Service Yard, while at the same time consolidating its park-specific administrative and maintenance functions into a smaller, more economical footprint, a significant portion of its parkland can be reclaimed to serve both active and passive uses.

On the active side, given that the acreage is flat, surrounded by a residential neighborhood of working families, close to a regularly scheduled bus line and only a short walk from Chevy Chase Recreation Center, it is an excellent site for new sports fields for youth.

On the passive side, since it is contiguous to the Los Angeles River and the Atwater Creek Stream restoration in the North Atwater section of Griffith Park, its reclaimed river-frontage can be converted to a picnic and wildlife viewing area that will complement the pedestrian/equestrian corridor currently along its bank.

All of these uses can be accomplished with sensitive planning that takes into account the needs of all users, including the existing Atwater horse-keeping community and the Recreation and Parks departmental functions that will remain at the site.

V. UPGRADES AND ADDITIONS

Additions and upgrades should be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the goals and objectives of ~~the Master~~this Vision Plan and based on ~~valid~~ analyses of the need for such additions and upgrades. Any upgrades and additions that are undertaken must be done in such a manner as to preserve and restore open space and wildlife habitat, protect wildlife corridors and to minimize the impact of public use and urbanization. Upgrades and additions should be designed in such a manner as to be consistent with the preservation of the Park's cultural and architectural history, and with preserving the undeveloped and natural aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity.

VI. DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Park's natural environment consists of 4,000 plus acres of watershed, flood plain and river. Native landscape predominates throughout the Park. With the exception of controversial signage at the Los Angeles Zoo, efforts have been made by leaseholders to put in place elements such as signage in a way that minimizes the urbanization of the Park.

Other than the paved parking lots and roads, much of the park infrastructure improvements reflect the work of the WPA, including granite trails with boulder edges, rock walls and rock-like steps. The use of this natural material, or natural-appearing material, provides the Park with a sense of being removed from the urban environment in which it is located and is a key element of an environmentally sensitive Urban Wilderness Identity. Throughout the Park, including those facilities held by leaseholders, the emphasis in any facility design work should be on maintaining the naturalness of the Park provided by the WPA elements. To protect and maintain the natural aesthetic, ~~all~~ elements of the Park, regardless of where located, ~~need to~~should meet the goal of maintaining the Park's environmentally coherent natural character.⁴⁵ With the recent designation of Griffith Park as an

⁴⁵ ~~The Melendrez Draft separated the Park into sections, some of which, such as the Crystal Springs area, were proposed to become more carnival like, with brightly colored flags and banners and other attractions associated with a carnival or amusement park atmosphere. Given the traffic flow of the Park, the way the Park is utilized, and the native landscaping of the Park, it is not possible to create a carnival or amusement park atmosphere in one are of the Park without necessarily destroying the overall natural environment of the Park. The entire Park needs to be preserved and maintained as a single entity with the natural~~

[Historic Cultural Monument, changes to the contributing element built facilities within the park will also require review by the Office of Historic Resources.](#) As to built facilities, the following elements should always be given consideration.

A. Infrastructure Design

The natural Park character is typically defined with stone, stucco, and natural or colored concrete with muted colors. To preserve the natural, environmentally coherent aesthetic of the Park, these are the preferred materials for infrastructure elements throughout the Park.

B. Sustainable Design Principles

Sustainable design principles should be applied throughout the Park to all aspects of additions and restoration, repairs, and maintenance, including building orientation, design and materials, and site design issues such as planting and native plant restoration, habitat enhancement, storm water management and watershed connections to the Los Angeles River.

Consistent with sustainable design principles and the Urban Wilderness Identity, materials used should be low-maintenance, durable and vandal-resistant. Whenever possible, previously used and recycled materials should be used. Improvements should comply with the energy efficiency requirements found in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.

C. Accessibility

All structures and playgrounds should be designed to be universally accessible as they are added or remodeled.

D. Furniture

Furniture used within the Park should maintain a natural, outdoors character consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

[environment protected by its identification as having an Urban Wilderness Identity.](#)

E. Lighting

Lighting throughout the Park should provide illumination while minimizing light pollution. Lighting fixtures should be consistent with the environmentally sensitive character of the Urban Wilderness Identity.

F. Wayfinding Signage and Graphics

Earth tones and natural colors can be used to create signage that is consistent with the natural character of the Urban Wilderness Identity. The signage should be simple, with a single design element descriptive of the Park.

VII. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. Recognize that Griffith Park Is ~~Only One Park~~ Unique Resource Within a Large Park System

1. Avoid using the ~~open-identified wilderness areas~~ space of Griffith Park as a location for facilities and recreational opportunities that could be more accessible to community use if situated in another location.

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2. Identify and maintain the unique recreational opportunities that exist ~~only~~ in Griffith Park, such as extensive hiking and open picnic areas.

- B. Involve Local Community In All Facilities Development And Design

1. Form a permanent, ~~community selected Citizens~~ Park Advisory Board to review and comment on all proposed facility changes, modifications or additions.
2. Ensure that design decisions are consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

- C.

~~Incorporate the Results of the Public Input Already Received and~~ Base All Decision-Making with Regard to Built Facilities on Public Input and Current Needs Analyses That Take into Account Facilities Available in Other Nearby Parks

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1. Maintain a current and updated list of facilities available within the Park as well as in nearby parks.
2. Obtain specific, ~~scientifically valid~~ information as to the need for any proposed addition to the Park facilities before undertaking the project.
3. Ad hoc projects, no matter how small, should not be permitted unless and until an ~~valid~~ analysis has been done as to the need for the project and its long-term impact on the natural character of the Park.
4. Involve the Citizens Park Advisory Board recommended by Item B above in all decision-making regarding expansion, destruction of, or additions to Park facilities.

D. Avoid Evicting or Displacing Established Park Users

1. Maintain a current and updated list of established Park users and the facilities that they access within the Park.
2. Ensure that no decision as to the addition, demolition or replacement of a facility results in an existing Park user no longer having access to necessary facilities.

E. Manage the Built Environment of the Park in Such a Manner That Maintenance, Rehabilitation, Restoration and New Construction Maintain a Character Compatible with the Urban Wilderness Identity

1. Develop an inventory of all the significant building materials within the Park that are consistent with the natural landscape.

2. Prepare a list of preferred materials, finishes, colors, etc., that are consistent with the natural aesthetic of the Urban Wilderness Identity.
 3. Develop a master restroom plan for the Park with standard design elements that are consistent with preservation of the Park's natural aesthetic and are universally accessible.
 4. Identify water tanks to be removed and those to remain, and develop a plan for an adaptive reuse or painting of specific tanks that blends in with the natural Park character.
 5. Develop a furniture palette with specifications for each type of furniture consistent with the natural character of the Park, and criteria for its use and maintenance.
 6. Develop a light fixture palette that minimizes light pollution and is consistent with the natural aesthetic of the Park to be implemented as repair and replacements are needed.
 7. Develop and implement a graphic identity and signage program throughout the Park that utilizes earthtones and is consistent with the natural aesthetic and non-urban aspects of the Park.
- F. Maximize Effective and Efficient Use of Existing Facilities Before Replacing or Adding to Those Facilities
1. Ensure that all existing facilities, including those held by leaseholders, are being effectively and efficiently used before adding new facilities.
 2. Establish a cooperative management committee with all existing leaseholders to ensure a system for easy accessibility to facilities for Park users.

- G. Emphasize Free Rather than Fee-Based Facilities and Activities
 - 1. Promote free use and enjoyment of the Park.
 - 2. Avoid privatization of Park facilities.
- H. Avoid Infringing upon Natural Areas
 - 1. Preserve natural species.
 - 2. Promote and preserve native landscaping.
 - 3. Preserve ~~open space~~[wilderness areas](#).
 - 4. Avoid adding to the footprints of existing facilities.
 - 5. Preserve wildlife corridors.

CHAPTER FIVE

MOBILITY

I. INTRODUCTION

Automobiles, buses, service and safety vehicles, cyclists, runners, commuters, horseback riders and hikers all make use of trails and roadways in Griffith Park. All enter from Los Angeles and surrounding cities and leave the Park into the encompassing highly urbanized districts. The goal of this Chapter is to conform usage of the Park's roads and trails to its Urban Wilderness Identity, preserving and strengthening a bright-line distinction between the Park's wilderness and the surrounding urban milieu.

For the past two decades, the City of Los Angeles and its various planning and development agencies have authorized increased density in housing and commercial development predicated on the notion that increasing population and changing economic and environment conditions will require Angelenos to make a transition from individually owned automobiles to public transit as their primary mode of transportation.

This portion of the [Master-Vision](#) Plan will discuss why priority should be given to promoting bus, light rail, subway and alternative transportation to and from the Park. To move visitors who arrive by public modes through the Park, this portion of the [Master-Vision](#) Plan proposes a shuttle system that will take people to the Park's most popular facilities and major attractions.

It builds from a premise that access and transportation should emphasize, instead of blur, the difference between the Park and its urban milieu. For example, in the City at large, priority is given to speeding the flow of traffic to benefit commuters, but in the Park, this [Master-Vision](#) Plan emphasizes moderating speed and discouraging through-driving. This [Master-Vision](#) Plan accordingly opts for the least polluting and most energy-efficient and quietest transportation – shuttle buses for example – to establish linkages connecting major Park centers, and thereby reducing dependence on automobiles. In the City, buses, bus shelters and benches are considered advertising mediums, but in the Park, buses, shuttles and their

attendant street furniture should eschew commercialization. Whereas asphalt, concrete and other impermeable parking lot surfaces may be preferable when the goal is to send runoff to storm drains, with drought and climate change permeable surfaces to recharge the water table are becoming more acceptable and preferable in a city setting and are better attuned to the Park's natural setting and identity.

II. MOTORIZED VEHICLE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

A. Definition

Motorized vehicle access and circulation as used in this Chapter encompass the roadway system leading into and circulating within and through the Park, the automobiles, buses, service and safety vehicles utilizing those roadways, the available and projected public transportation into and within the Park, and the management and maintenance of its roadways.⁴⁶

B. Entrances and Exits

⁴⁶ Consistent with the City Ordinance, Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 63.44 B16 governing wheeled vehicles, in this Chapter "cyclists" includes all wheeled vehicles. Nothing in this [Master Vision](#) Plan would change the terms of the City Ordinance and, to the contrary, the provisions of the existing Code, prohibiting cycles and vehicles, whether powered by a motor or human power, from being driven on anything other than a path, road or drive designated for that purpose, must be maintained.

Motorized vehicles enter Griffith Park through four primary gateways: Los Feliz Boulevard/Riverside Drive, Crystal Springs/Griffith Park Drive, North Zoo Drive, and Forest Lawn Drive.⁴⁷ Secondary locations are located at Vermont Canyon, Western Canyon (Fern Dell), Victory Boulevard and Bronson Canyon.⁴⁸ Park users can enter the Park on public transportation through Route 96 of the Metro Line which includes stops within the Park at the Pony and Train rides, Park Center, and the L.A. Zoo. Regrettably, there is currently no public transportation into the Park in the north and northwest portions of the Park where Travel Town, L.A. Live Steamers, Martinez Arena, Mineral Wells, Headworks and the north picnicking areas are found.

Entrances to the Park should immediately distinguish it from its urban milieu. Consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity, any structures should be modest in scale, and surrounding hardscape left to a minimum. If kiosks with interpretative panels are used, they should be cleaned and maintained on a regular basis since they not only create the first impressions of the Park, but also set behavioral expectations for individuals visiting the Park.

C. Roads

There are thirty-eight (38) miles of paved roads in the Park. Griffith Park Drive is the main entrance to the Park from Los Feliz Boulevard and Riverside Drive. It passes the pony and train rides and the Ranger Headquarters and Los Feliz Adobe before turning left at its junction with Crystal Springs Drive and continuing through the Park past Mineral Wells Picnic Area to Travel Town and a junction with Zoo Drive. Zoo Drive enters the Park at Victory Boulevard and Riverside Drive and continues around the perimeter of the Park until it becomes the Western Heritage Way in front of the Autry National Center and then Crystal Springs Drive beyond the Autry National Center. Vermont Canyon Road enters the Park at the end of Vermont Avenue and continues through the Park past the Greek Theatre until it comes to the tunnel where it branches into West Observatory Road and East Observatory Road.

⁴⁷ The lack of an exit from southbound I-5 serving the northeast corner of the Park substantially increases traffic on Los Feliz Boulevard and Griffith Park Drive. Any reconfiguration of entrances and exits to the Park should give priority to an entrance from the southbound I-5.

⁴⁸ Although Commonwealth Avenue is not a gateway to the Park, it is an access point for Commonwealth Service Yard and Municipal Nursery, serves as a controlled entrance and exit for Greek Theatre events and is a designated emergency route into the Park for firefighters and law enforcement.

Fern Dell Drive enters the Park at Western Avenue and Los Feliz Boulevard and continues into the Park until it ends at the junction with Western Canyon Road. Western Canyon Road proceeds to the Observatory.⁴⁹

There are currently two major paved roads in the Park that are closed to motorized traffic: (1) Mount Hollywood Drive (closed to motorized traffic just beyond the Observatory tunnel area), and (2) Vista del Valle Drive (closed at Commonwealth Canyon Drive). These roads wind into the Park's central core, where they ultimately connect with each other or Griffith Park Drive, the Park's through road for motorized vehicles. In the mid-1990s, the decision to permanently close these mountain roads to all but official and emergency vehicles created a new automobile-free zone for people using the Park's interior. Pedestrians, equestrians and bicyclists benefited at once from the change. The action multiplied significantly the number of auto-free routes available to people using the Park. Wide enough to reduce the chance of collisions between bicyclists and pedestrians, these scenic, winding roads allow peaceful coexistence among different users.

This [Master-Vision](#) Plan recommends that these roads remain closed:

- (1) They fail to meet the standards of the Department of Transportation;
- (2) Upgrading the roads would require massive investment;
- (3) Park Rangers, police and fire fighters support keeping the roads closed for safety and security reasons;
- (4) The roads operate as valuable hiking, equestrian and bicycling resources; and
- (5) The roads in the Park that are open to motorized vehicles satisfactorily service the existing Park traffic.

In addition to Mount Hollywood and Vista Del Valle Drives, the loop road connecting the Old Zoo entrance from Griffith Park Drive and the Merry-Go-Round parking lot is closed and there is no pressing need to reopen it to daily general use.

⁴⁹ A complete map of the existing paved roads can be found at Appendix 22f.

Consideration should be given to upgrading the Merry-Go-Round loop road connection to applicable standards so that it might provide a temporary alternative route for traffic within the Park when major special events preclude access to and from Griffith Park Drive.

D. Through Auto Traffic

Morning and evening commuters using the Zoo Drive/Crystal Springs/Griffith Park Drive corridor as an alternative from the eastern San Fernando Valley to the Los Feliz and Hollywood area are a chronic problem. While there are no studies documenting the number of private vehicles using the Park as an alternative to the 134 Freeway and Interstate 5, it is widely recognized that it is so used. In addition to disrupting the purpose and tranquility of the Park, many commuters travel at speeds well in excess of the posted 25-mile per hour speed limit. This presents a safety hazard for Park visitors who share and cross this corridor. Cyclists, equestrians, hikers, runners, picnickers, users of play areas adjacent to the roads, and golf cart passengers are placed at risk. Wildlife are also vulnerable to this automobile traffic and too often road kill is a result.

Measures are necessary to mitigate the use of the Park as an alternative route. Consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park, innovative thinking and planning are necessary to design systems that will control and slow this traffic. Monitored and controlled speed limits, forced stops at frequent intervals and other traffic calming methods may become necessary.

E. Public Transit

The City of Los Angeles aggressively promotes public transportation to mitigate automobile traffic in the increasingly dense metropolis. Griffith Park, lacking adequate transportation, lags behind. Although Metro buses serve Los Feliz Boulevard stops at the Park's Western Canyon and Riverside gateways, as of this writing, Metro Route 96 is the only bus line entering the Park and it does not do so after 7:00 p.m. It enters and exits the Park at Los Feliz Boulevard and Riverside Drive, makes three stops along the Park's eastern corridor, and enters and exits the Park at Victory Boulevard traveling toward Alameda Avenue and the City of Burbank.

More, -and more frequent, Metro bus routes should be established to bring visitors to Griffith Park. Correspondingly, the DASH connections operated by the City of Los Angeles serving the greater Los Feliz area should be extended to bring visitors to the Vermont Canyon and Western Canyon areas of the Park, and new DASH connections established linking the Park to the Red Line subway stops at

Vermont/Sunset and Hollywood/Western. Recently, the City has begun to provide DASH service on week-ends linking the Observatory and the subway station at Vermont and Sunset. On its way to the Observatory, the DASH bus will also pick up walkers who are leaving Vermont Canyon for the Observatory. It is an important beginning to providing extended public transit for visitors to the Park.

On the Park's east, similar linkages should be explored. In the long term, a desirable way to enable visitors to access the Park would be by a subway stop located near the Zoo and the Autry. Such a stop would permit users to access the Park and simultaneously reduce traffic on surrounding streets as well as greenhouse gas emissions.

As these new modes are implemented, a [free](#) in-Park shuttle system should be phased in to move visitors to the Park's most popular facilities and major venues. The first routes established should travel the Griffith Park Drive/Crystal Springs/Zoo Drive corridor, making intermediate stops at popular areas and a Vermont Canyon/Western Canyon loop route delivering visitors to the Observatory/Mount Hollywood trail area and Fern Dell.

The shuttle system must be [without at minimal](#) cost to users, fully accessible, environmentally responsible and otherwise consistent with the Park's identity as an Urban Wilderness. Features such as overhead windows to facilitate views of the Park would enhance the visitors' pleasure and support the Urban Wilderness experience. Gear storage areas and exterior bicycle racks should also be available for those using the shuttle system.⁵⁰

F. Parking

According to counts provided by Myer Mohaddes and Associates Transportation Planners and as researched by members of the Working Group, there are approximately 10,000 spaces for car parking within the Park. Approximately seventy percent (70%) of them are in dedicated surface lots, twenty percent (20%) are curbside parking areas, and ten percent (10%) are temporary spaces at special event venues such as the Greek Theatre.⁵¹ To the extent there are any parking shortages, they are limited to very specific locations or the result of

⁵⁰ The National Park Service has developed a variety of vehicles for such purposes. The motorized shuttles in Zion National Park are an outstanding example of such vehicles.

⁵¹ See Appendix 13 hereto.

isolated special events. In keeping with the Urban Wilderness Identity, such shortages could be alleviated through a park-and-ride shuttle system utilizing contingency parking areas.⁵² For a listing of 2005 Park closures and a count of Griffith Park's current parking spaces, please see the table at Appendix 13.

G. Parking Lots

⁵² See Appendix 14 hereto.

As it has for more than 110 years, parking should remain free in Griffith Park. Priority should be given to resurfacing the Park's existing asphalt and concrete lots with environmentally responsible, water-permeable materials that will reduce the "heat island" effect and enhance the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity. Such an effort is already underway at the Greater Los Angeles Zoo which is pioneering environmentally responsible improvements through its departmental Parking Lot Master Plan. These improvements not only promote water capture, they increase the Park's canopy by planting additional trees.⁵³ The identical principles are being applied elsewhere in the Park by the Bureau of Sanitation and its plan for the North Atwater Creek Stream Restoration adjacent to Central Service Yard and North Atwater Park across the River in Griffith Park. The design for its parking area features a water-permeable surface that promotes water capture and is shaded by trees.

Striping on many of the Park's existing lots is faded or nonexistent, thereby decreasing the carrying capacity of the available lots. In addition to resurfacing these lots with environmentally responsible materials, the lots should be re-striped to promote the most effective use of the available space.

H. Parking Structures

Parking structures are manmade intrusions inconsistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity. Such structures introduce noise and light pollution, public safety issues, maintenance problems and user fees. These negative qualities, along with the increased automobile traffic that inevitably occurs in proximity to such structures, materially damage the park-like nature of the picnic areas and recreational facilities that are adjacent to the lots. In the future, if the need arises, mass, concentrated parking structures should be placed outside of the Park's boundaries. [AC candidates](#) for supplementary park-and-shuttle programs could include the municipal parking structure at Highland and Hollywood ~~and the Park-adjacent Warner Brothers Burbank employee parking structure.~~

I. Special Event And Seasonal Parking

Organized relays and walks benefiting major charities are held annually in Griffith Park. Ample parking exists within the Park for these early-morning events which generally conclude by 10:30 a.m. The exception to this rule is the highly

⁵³ See Appendix 15 hereto.

popular Saint John's Health Center 26.2 Relay Marathon.⁵⁴ Most participants arriving by automobile find parking within the Park, but the marathon's organizers have arranged for overflow parking with free shuttle service to the Park at the Costco complex on Los Feliz Boulevard.

Periodically, Symphony in the Glen concerts are held on Sunday evenings in the Old Zoo Picnic area. General parking is available in the Merry-Go-Round area lots. A free loop shuttle, which operates from the mouth of the Old Zoo Picnic Area, delivers wheelchair visitors, seniors and other concertgoers directly to the performance site.

Ticket holders to the Greek Theatre's 2006 season chose from three options: (1) stacked general parking at \$15.00 an event, (2) advance reservation valet parking at \$50.00 an event, and (3) equal access parking. Several years ago, members of the Los Feliz and Griffith Park community participated in a Greek Theatre Task Force that recommended a park-and-shuttle system be established in the Los Angeles Zoo parking lot. The proposed system would permit concertgoers to take advantage of I-5 and 134 freeway ramps feeding into the Park, and help alleviate traffic congestion on Los Feliz Boulevard and nearby streets before and after concerts. This recommendation has not been, but should be, implemented. This is not a concept new to patrons of outdoor venues in Los Angeles. For example, during the Hollywood Bowl concert season, Hollywood Bowl patrons take advantage of park-and-ride shuttles located in the Los Angeles Zoo parking lot.

J. Railroads, Aerial Tramways and Funiculars

While short streetcar lines like that at The Grove, or funiculars like the moribund Angel's Flight Railway on Bunker Hill, and other fixed rail novelties may be appropriate attractions for theme parks, historic urban districts or shopping centers, they ~~have no place in~~ ~~are not appropriate for~~ the Urban Wilderness of Griffith Park. They erode ~~the Griffith~~ Park's unique, historic function as a respite from a busy metropolis and undermine the Park's primary identity as a wilderness.

~~The Melendrez Draft's proposed aerial tramway in Vermont Canyon, for example, not only requires major staging areas at the expense of green and open space, it also endangers several sites of Nevin's Barberry, the exceedingly rare native plant protected by the California Endangered Species Act. It also runs~~

⁵⁴ Also known as The Jimmy Stewart Relay.

~~contrary to the spirit, and likely violates the letter, of the City's ridge line ordinance. This ordinance was adopted to protect Los Angeles' natural view shed, an aspect of the City's collective heritage that is being rapidly diminished by stepped-up hillside development.~~

Fixed rail and aerial trams also produce ~~undesirable~~ by-products undesireable for Griffith Park including:

- (1) Noise pollution caused by the clatter, bells, braking systems and powerful engines that are part of such systems that will necessarily be amplified and exaggerated in a park and canyon setting;
- (2) Light pollution caused by the need to brightly illuminate 24 hours a day the staging areas for such recreational rail systems, not only for public safety, but also to thwart the vandalism that such systems attract; and
- (3) Fees that will be necessary to offset the costs of operating, maintaining and insuring the recreational systems.

Aerial tramways have been proposed for Griffith Park before and have always been resoundingly rejected. In 1968, two competing plans were advanced by two private consortia to build an aerial tramway leading to a proposed restaurant and museum on Mount Hollywood. Charges of collusion between City officials and developers surfaced, and the proposals were ultimately defeated. The two Council members in whose districts Griffith Park was then situated rebuffed the plans, saying that they would inject commercialism into the Park, destroy its atmosphere and add needless concrete. In a June 1968 editorial entitled "The Fight to Save Griffith Park," the *Los Angeles Times* editorial board asked "Will Griffith Park . . . be opened up for revenue-producing rides . . . restaurants and attractions a la Coney Island? Or will the City's efforts be directed toward improving the 4063-acre Park as a place for outdoor recreation and grass, hills, trees and natural wildlife . . . We question whether tram rides and fancy view restaurants belong in the scenic spot which Griffith J. Griffith donated to the City for 'recreation and rest' for the masses."

K. Maps and Information

An accurate visitor brochure should be produced with a plan of the Park's trails, roads and facilities. The brochure should be available to visitors at the Crystal Springs Drive Visitors Center and the Park's major attractions. It should be provided

in at least Spanish and English, and provision should be made for individuals who are blind to receive an appropriately modified version.

L. Road Maintenance

Maintenance of the roadway system, including its curbing and immediately adjacent greenery, should be a priority. The curb systems should be upgraded and replaced where necessary in a manner that: (1) is consistent with the rustic nature of the Park and (2) consistent with the Park's historic linkages to the Civilian Conservation Corps. Surviving examples of CCC craftsmanship in curbs, culverts and retaining walls are worth preserving and can set a stylistic tone for new construction. The greenery at the edges of the roads should be carefully designed and maintained to emphasize that the road is in a Park and, at the same time, help influence and calm traffic.

III. NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

A. Definition

For purposes of this section, the term "non-motorized" is defined to include runners, hikers, walkers, cyclists and equestrians.

B. Entrances and Exits

In addition to the gateways that serve motorized users, there are a number of points of ingress and egress that are used by non-motorized visitors to the Park. Obvious examples are the bridge and tunnel system that carries equestrians over and under the L.A. River and I-5 Freeway directly to the Park's trails and the Crystal Springs Bikeway, Northern Bike Route and Los Angeles River Bikeway that funnel cyclists into the Park. Less obvious are the numerous pedestrian routes into the Park. Many hikers, walkers, runners and others who use the Park on a regular basis enter it on foot from access points on all sides. Others arrive by public transit and choose from various stops that place them near Park boundaries in relatively close proximity to its roads and trail heads.

C. Pedestrian and Equestrian Trails

Griffith Park's 53 miles of dirt trails are shared by a substantial volume of walkers and equestrians. The reasons why people value the trails differ. They are

variously seen as a respite from the urban milieu, a venue for family and social interaction, a component in a personal fitness program, a place for native plant and wildlife viewing, and, on specially permitted occasions such as the Los Angeles Unified School District cross-country meets, a site where athletic competitions can be staged.

1. Trail heads

There are currently no formally identified “trail heads” within the Park. While frequent trail users have come to recognize areas such as the Merry-Go-Round parking lot as a meeting place to begin a hike, no signage exists providing information about the trails leading off from a certain location. Some system of formal trail head identification system for major trails, including information as to the grade of the trail in the steeper areas, would be helpful for both new and experienced Park users and would provide a system for locating individuals who might be lost or otherwise unable to locate themselves within the Park. These locations could also provide information whether the trail is open and usable by both pedestrians and equestrians.

2. Upkeep and Improvements

Landslides and erosion are the trail system’s two biggest enemies. Machine-operators tend to widen trails in the aftermath of geological events, and trails erode from frequent use. Both preservation and continued enjoyment of the Park’s trails require that they be sensitively maintained by staff and respected by their users. If not, the resultant dust bowl effect and the loss of flora and habitat will materially diminish the experience for all Park users. An educational program should be initiated to discourage both inadvertent trail widening by maintenance staff and trail shortcutting by Park users.

3. Opportunities for Trail Linkages

Passed by the California Legislature in 1989, AB 1516 was drafted in order to link the City’s trails, thereby extending their recreational value. Its intended result, the Rim of the Valley Trail, is part of California’s State Recreational Trails Master plans.⁵⁵ The Rim of the Valley Trail will connect riding and hiking trails throughout Greater Los Angeles. Upon completion, it will link trails in the City and Valley – including Griffith Park trails – creating a unified recreational corridor. Every effort

⁵⁵ See Appendix 17 hereto.

should be made by the Department of Recreation and Parks to cooperate with, and advance, this effort.

D. Bicycle Routes and Lanes

Thanks in part to specific capital improvements made in accordance with the Bicycle Element of the Department of Transportation's Master Plan, there are more than 26 miles of bikeways and bike routes in Griffith Park. Approximately 23 of those miles are auto-free.

Capital improvements undertaken specifically for cyclists in recent years include two perimeter bikeways, the Crystal Springs Bikeway and the Northern Bike Route. There is also a striped and signed bicycle lane extending from just north of the Park's Los Feliz Boulevard entrance to Travel Town. In addition, the Los Angeles River Bikeway is a dedicated bike-only route entering the Park south of Los Feliz Boulevard via the Alex Baum elevated bicycle bridge and extending the length of the Park. At various points throughout the Park, cyclists can go from one route to another.

E. Closed Interior Roads

The decision made in the mid-1990s to permanently close Mount Hollywood Drive and Vista Del Valle Drive to motorized traffic opened up a new automobile-free zone for bicyclists in the Park's interior. These paved roads are now used harmoniously by all of the Park's non-motorized users: walkers, runners, horseback riders and cyclists.

IV. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Acknowledge the Need to Make All Decisions Regarding Mobility in the Park in a Manner Consistent with Protecting the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park
 - A. All mobility solutions should support the identity of the Park as an Urban Wilderness by emphasizing the difference between the Park and its urban milieu.
 - B. Consistent with the City's planning for higher density and decreased use of the individual automobile, priority should be given to accessing the Park by means other than the private

automobile.

- C. Public transit agencies should be encouraged to increase the routes going to the Park and provide transportation across the Park.
- 2. Ingress and Egress to the Park Should Support the Urban Wilderness Experience of the Park
 - A. Entrances to the Park should emphasize the distinction between the urban milieu and the Park experience.
 - B. Informational signage consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity should be available at the entrances to the Park. There is no currently apparent need for entrance kiosks.
- 3. Existing Parking Should Be Managed and Maintained in an Environmentally Sound Manner and No New Parking Structures Should Be Introduced
 - A. Existing parking lots should be resurfaced with environmentally responsible materials.
 - B. Existing parking lots should be appropriately striped and the striping maintained.
 - C. No apparent current need exists for any parking structures and if such parking structures did become necessary, they should be located immediately outside the boundaries of the Park with a fully developed park and ride shuttle system available to transport Park users into and round the Park.
- 4. Movement of Visitors Within the Park Should Be by Environmentally Responsible Shuttle Systems
 - A. Any system introduced into the Park to move visitors around the Park should emphasize environmentally sound shuttle systems.

- B. No new recreational rides, such as railroads, aerial tramways or funiculars, should be placed in the Park.
5. The Existing Road System Should Be Appropriately Managed and Maintained in a Manner that Supports the Urban Wilderness Identity
- A. The Crystal Springs Corridor should be managed and maintained in a manner that utilizes traffic calming measures and greenery in a manner that discourages speeding and commuters.
 - B. With the exception of the loop road between the Old Zoo and Griffith Park Drive, the interior paved roads of the Park that are currently closed should be permanently closed and maintained in a manner that encourages usage by pedestrians, runners, equestrians and cyclists. Consideration should be given to bringing the Merry-Go-Round loop road connection up to standards necessary to provide a temporary alternate route for traffic within the Park when major special events preclude access to and from Griffith Park Drive.
6. The Existing Trails and Roads Utilized by Non-Motorized Vehicles and Pedestrians Must Be Managed and Maintained in a Manner that Preserves the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.
- A. In consultation with the Park ecologist, the trails and roads must be preserved and managed for pedestrian safety without negatively impacting the Park's natural features.
 - B. Before undertaking Park repairs and improvements, consider the impact on trail users' access, safety and tranquility.
 - C. For user information and back-country safety, publish an accurate trail map coded to a discreet signage and mileage-marker system, obtainable at the Park Ranger Station.
 - D. To promote a safe and positive experience, staff the Park with resident Park Rangers who are knowledgeable about the Park's trail system and focused on the security and quality-of-life issues that arise in a regional park.

- E. Enforce all safety rules and regulations, such as the City’s ordinances banning wheels on trails, running of horses, smoking and disturbing the peace.
7. Maintain and Manage the Park Trails, Roads and Entrances in a Safe Manner for All Current Park Users.
- A. Maintain and manage closed mountain roads in a manner consistent with the needs of all current Park users. Continue to clear rockslides and fill potholes that occur after heavy rains and ensure that drivers of permitted vehicles, i.e. film location trucks and vans, proceed with caution and abide by the speed limit.
 - B. Replace maintenance practices for trails and roads that create hazardous surfaces, such as the deep, parallel lines cut with a harrow.
 - C. Halt The hazardous deterioration of the woodcrete fencing along bridle trails ~~must be stopped~~ and, wherever necessary, the woodcrete replaced and repaired and added to as appropriate.
 - D. Regularly remove Rocks on bridle trails that present hazards for trail users ~~should be regularly removed~~.
 - E. Officially designate The Zoo Drive Equestrian Staging Area ~~should be officially designated~~ as such an area and provided ~~with~~ an area for horse trailer parking, tie rails and a small holding corral.
 - F. Cooperate with the citywide Rim of the Valley Trail Initiative and develop linkages that will connect Griffith Park’s trails to others in the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles Basin.
 - G. Build an equestrian bridge over the Los Angeles River in Atwater Village as a replacement for the dirt crossing

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that will be lost as the river returns to a natural state.

- H. Establish “safe running routes” for runners that are looping or partially looping and have safe transitional easements at intersections, as well as signage and mile markers to encourage the use of the routes.
- I. Provide protection for runners in bike lanes and carefully mark the bike lanes, particularly at intersections.
- J. Improve the drainage in the tunnel under the I-5 access road just north of the Autry so that it can be used without fear of standing water and other debris.
- K. Repeal the ban on 10K routes past the Zoo Parking lot to preserve major race events in Griffith Park, and restore the importance they traditionally have held on the Park’s calendar.
- L. Preserve the grassy picnic area north of the Greek Theatre in Vermont Canyon as an assembly area for LAUSD high school cross-country running meets.
- M. On cross-country meet days for local high schools, arrange for Greek Theatre restrooms to be available to students before and after races.
- N. Bring Bikeway gates and transitions into conformity with Department of Transportation standards and improve the maintenance and weed suppression.
- O. Create a better exit and entry solution for cyclists at Victory Boulevard.
- P. Provide environmentally responsible bicycle racks in appropriate Park locations, with maps available as to the Park’s approved bicycle routes.

CHAPTER SIX

PARK MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

I. INTRODUCTION

The Urban Wilderness Identity is the 21st century manifestation of Colonel Griffith's vision for Griffith Park. The Colonel correctly foresaw the day when Los Angeles would be a congested metropolis and his gift of open space—rustic and available to all—would be a valuable resource. To ensure that the natural resources of the Park remain rustic and available to, as specified by Colonel Griffith, the “plain people” as well as free from economic exploitation, the management structure of the Park must be one that is consistent with, and supportive of, that outcome. As discussed in this Chapter, the current ~~hodgepodge of~~ overlapping and at times conflicting authority with regard to the Park needs to be sorted out and restructured in a rational way to balance the wilderness aspects of the Park with its equally important role as a natural resource for all of the people of Los Angeles.

A management system dedicated to preserving the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity requires a stewardship that embraces that Identity as well as an understanding of the manner in which the Park's natural resources can be viably sustained. At the same time, the management system must oversee and effectively manage for the benefit of Park visitors a complex mix of recreational uses within a geographical land area that is larger than the City of Beverly Hills.

These goals and needs require a transparent organizational structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The system must be accountable and responsive to the public and responsible for fully disclosed benchmarks for success. Management and staff, as well as all the visitors to the Park, must share a sense of ownership and responsibility for the future of the Park. It is only through a transparent, goal-oriented management structure with broad-based stewardship that Griffith Park can maintain its unique contribution to the City of Los Angeles.

II. THE CURRENT ELEMENTS OF PARK MANAGEMENT

The current administrative structure for Griffith Park is an outgrowth of both adopted law, including the Charter for the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles City Administrative Code, and decisions made by the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners with regard to the internal structure of the Department of Recreation and Parks. A brief review of the legal basis for the current structure provides insight into what is, ~~on paper,~~ the manner in which the Park's resources and decisions about the use of those resources is currently managed.

This review of the legal structure does not, however, provide a full picture of the enormous complexities involved in either the day-to-day management of the Park or the manner in which decisions about the use of various resources contained in the Park are generated, finalized and implemented. ~~On both a day-to-day basis and with regard to special events, venues or projects, various City Departments and appointed and elected government officials can, and do, directly impact and influence how the Park's resources are utilized, sometimes without benefit of public comment or participation and in a manner that can be in dramatic contradiction to preserving Griffith Park's identity as an Urban Wilderness.~~

What follows is a very brief overview of the major current City entities involved in decision-making and day-to-day implementation of those decisions for Griffith Park. In addition to these City entities, there are many affinity groups across a wide range of interests, including hiking groups, recreation groups, cultural groups, ecological groups, neighborhood groups and equestrian groups and are too numerous to list in this document. These groups and their leadership are often involved in decisions of interest to the group as to the day-to-day use of the Park and have various relationships with both elected officials and employees of Recreation and Parks with regard to particular interests. The need to ensure that all such groups remain involved and active in the Park is discussed in Section VII of this Chapter.

A. Involved City Departments

1. The Department of Recreation and Parks

The Department of Recreation and Parks (hereinafter sometimes "Department") is created by Article I, Section 500 and governed by Article V, Section 590 *et. seq.* of the Charter of the City of Los Angeles. Section 590 provides that the Department is to establish, construct, maintain, and operate and control, wherever located, all parks in the City of Los Angeles as well as all recreational facilities. As part of that authority, the Department has the authority to establish schedules for charges for special services.

The Charter further provides for a five-person Board of Commissioners, appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council. The Board meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. except for the months of July, August and December. In those three months, the Board meets only once a month on the second Wednesday of the month. The Board of Commissioners has the authority, pursuant to Section 591 of the Charter of the City of Los Angeles, to organize the work of the Department into divisions and to appoint an administrative officer for each division or for any group of divisions.

a. The Funds Available for Recreation and Parks

The Board of Commissioners also has the authority to budget and spend the monies placed in the Recreation and Parks Fund. Pursuant to the Charter, 0.0325 percent of the assessed value of property in the City of Los Angeles is placed in that fund, along with whatever other general funds or other funds are directed to the Recreation and Parks Fund. Pursuant to Section 591, Charter of the City of Los Angeles, all sums in the Recreation and Parks Fund are to be credited to, and used by, the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners. Unless provided for by separate ordinance, all funds generated by and through Griffith Park go into the Recreation and Parks Fund.

Division 5, Chapter 113 of the Administrative Code for the City of Los Angeles established, by ordinance, the Griffith Park 2004 Trust Fund. The Griffith Park 2004 Trust Fund was established for receipt of money from a settlement reached in litigation entitled *City of Glendale v. City of Los Angeles*, Los Angeles Superior Court Case Number BC 275062. That case involved the sale of just over one acre of Griffith Park land, 49,388 square feet of Park land, to relieve traffic congestion within the City of Glendale. The amount paid from the City of Glendale was over \$600,000.00. The funds are restricted to capital improvements in Griffith Park. Pursuant to the Administrative Code, the decision as to how to use the funds ~~was~~ is

to be made by the General Manager with approval of the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners and in consultation with the Council member from Council District Four. ~~In practice, the General Manager and Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners follow the direction of Council District Four as to the use of the funds, and there is no public oversight or input other than as an approval item on the agenda of the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners.~~

An additional fund has been established as a result of the May 2007 fire. On May 16, 2007, the City Council established the Griffith Park Restoration Account to receive funds for the restoration of the Park following the fire. See, Council File Number 07-118. This is a special fund, Fund 302, Department 89, Account 9300, set up to accept donations for Griffith Park restoration. No particular restrictions are in place with regard to this fund, other than that the funds are to be used for the restoration of the Park. ~~As with the funds described above from the litigation with the City of Glendale, it appears that the use of these funds will be largely determined by appointed and elected government officials without any specified public input process other than whatever approval may be sought from the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners.~~

In addition to these special funds, ~~the Department is in the process of developing the Los Angeles Parks Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt fund organization founded to support the activities of the Department of Recreation and Parks has been established. Information regarding the L.A. Parks foundation is available on their website located at www.laparksfoundation.org. The Working Group preparing this document has been unable to obtain any information from the employees of the Department of Recreation and Parks about this tax-exempt fund, including the name given to the fund and its current corporate status, other than to be told that the initial Board has already been selected. A search of the records of the California Secretary of State under a wide range of possible names for such an organization failed to identify any non-profit corporation registered with that office serving the purpose identified by the Department employees.~~

b. Current Staff Structure of Department of Recreation and Parks

The Department is responsible for more than 385 public parks and recreation centers, including Griffith Park, various open spaces, 13 golf courses, several camps, public beaches and historic sites. The Department also maintains a number of public buildings, including libraries, and police and fire stations.

The General Manager, who is appointed by the Mayor with approval of the City Council, has overall responsibility for managing the Department and reports to the Board of Recreation and Parks Commission. Beyond identifying the General Manager position, the City Charter does not include any specific provisions as to the structure of the Department. Instead, it gives the authority for the organizational structure to the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners.

In recent years, the Department has organized its properties by geographic region: Metro, Valley ~~and~~, Pacific ~~and West~~. In 2006, while this Master Plan was being developed, the Department extracted Griffith Park from the Metro Region and used it to anchor a new region identified as the Griffith Region. In 2008, the Department was again restructured, with Griffith Park now included as part of the reorganized Griffith-Metro region. This Region comprises a collection of parks and properties that include Griffith Park, Runyon Canyon Park, Pershing Square, Yucca Recreation Center, Wattles Mansion and Gardens, the Municipal Camping Division, and certain other functions. Although the City's major golf courses are in Griffith Park, under the current Department structure, golf courses are treated as a separate entity and do not report to the Region of the Department of Recreation and Parks that contains Griffith Park. As a result, under the current management structure, the individual responsible for Griffith Park has no control or management with regard to the use of the nine percent of the Park lands that makes up the golf courses, or the numerous facilities attached to the golf courses. Such a management structure appears to make it difficult, if not impossible, challenging to ensure that the Park management can effectively ensure the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.

The Department currently employs over 2,000 full-time and 6,000 part-time employees. An unidentified number of these employees are assigned exclusively to Griffith Park. Since some functions that need to be performed within the Park or for the benefit of the Park cross departmental lines, several Park facilities and uses are managed and staffed by employees who are shared with other Department properties. On occasion, the Department reassigns members of its workforce to other duties or locations. As a result, consistent management of the Park by knowledgeable individuals is a challenge.

c. Park Advisory Boards

The Department has promulgated and published a handbook known as the "Park Advisory Board Handbook." This Handbook generally describes the function, obligation and responsibility of entities known as "Park Advisory Boards." Park Advisory Boards are created by the Recreational Director/Facility Manager of a particular facility. They operate under the guidance of the Recreational

Director/Facility Manager. Each Board is to have an uneven number of members and to meet at least once each quarter. The Department reports having more than 150 of these Park Advisory Boards with more than 1,000 community volunteers involved in the Boards.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ For a listing of these Boards for Regional Parks, see Appendix 20 hereto.

~~Until the time of the public outcry over the Melendrez Master Plan resulted in the creation of the Master Plan Working Group, other than the Parks, River and Open Space (“PROS”) Committee established by local Neighborhood Councils,⁵⁷ there was no active, community-based board, advisory committee or other entity of any type involved in Griffith Park. Recently, the Department of Recreation and Parks added to its website the statement that “Currently Griffith Park does not have an advisory board, but does have a Griffith Park Resource Board which is co-chaired by Mark Mariscal and Councilman Tom LaBonge.” Mr. LaBonge is the current Councilperson from Council District Four and Mark Mariscal is an employee of the Department of Recreation and Parks. This Board is a meeting of the stakeholders of Griffith Park, including the concessionaires. Until recently, this Resource Board rarely met. The Resource Board is controlled by elected and appointed government officials and does not provide an opportunity for community-based, community-selected individuals to be effectively involved in the decisions regarding the use and management of the resources of Griffith Park of the type we believe necessary to protect the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park.~~

2. The Bureau of Engineering, Department of Public Works

The Bureau of Engineering (“BOE”) provides planning, engineering and construction for facilities within Griffith Park. See, Council File 2001. The Department of Recreation and Parks is, however, ultimately responsible for determining what work BOE conducts in the Park and the manner in which the work is completed. All advance planning for any work done by BOE is done by employees of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Because of this, it should be possible to ensure that all construction done in the Park, even if completed by the Bureau of Engineering, Department of Public Works, is consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity.

3. The Department of Water and Power

With the exception of the internal irrigation system for Griffith Park, the Department of Water and Power (LADWP) oversees the entirety of the Park’s water system and has the authority to run water lines and distribution systems in the Park. Notable throughout the Park are seventeen water tanks. One additional tank is being constructed on Mt. Hollywood Drive. When it is put into service, there will be eighteen tanks, of which nine are active and nine are out-of-service. As discussed in

⁵⁷ ~~See Appendix 21 hereto.~~

the Built Environment Chapter of this Master Plan, under current interdepartmental agreements, LADWP is not responsible for removing out-of-service tanks.

LADWP also provides electricity for the Park. Most of the power transmission relies on overhead poles. The activities of LADWP can have, and have had, a direct impact on numerous areas and facilities within the Park.

Among other things, LADWP leases and controls the area known as the Headworks area or Spreading Basin, a 44-acre parcel located northwest of Travel Town. As this ~~Master~~ Plan is being developed, plans are proceeding to transfer the Silverlake Reservoir water supply to semi-submerged tanks to be installed at the Headworks site. A plan to reclaim the remainder of the Headworks area as a riverside riparian habitat and passive recreation area is dependent on funding from the LADWP and United States Army Corps of Engineers.

LADWP is also part of a newly formed joint authority responsible for overseeing the rehabilitation of the Los Angeles River. The relationship between that joint authority and RAP with regard to the portion of the River running through Griffith Park has yet to be defined but River related projects should be undertaken in such a way that they are consistent with both this Vision Plan and the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan. The potential impact of actions by the joint authority on the Park and its facilities is not yet fully understood.

Since 1996, the LADWP has operated an annual Lights Festival in the Park's Central area. The festival is open from Thanksgiving weekend through December 30. Currently, a one-mile stretch is designated for the event on Crystal Springs Drive between Griffith Park Drive and the Zoo parking lot, with themed light displays primarily on the west side of the road. The Festival is visited largely by patrons in cars, who enter the area at Los Feliz Boulevard and Crystal Springs Drive and travel from south to north through the display. Although some visitors park their vehicles in the Zoo parking lot and walk along a protected wide equestrian trail or ride bicycles, the majority of the visitors use their vehicles. The Light Festival is the longest and largest public event held annually in the Park. In recent years, over 150,000 cars a year have been recorded. On popular nights, event-goers wait from thirty minutes to two hours to drive through the display, ~~idling their engines in long lines that frequently begin outside the Park's boundaries. Compounding this waste of fossil fuel and the inconvenience it represents to viewers, this degrades the Park's air quality, negatively impacts its flora and fauna, and in a ripple effect, congests freeway and street traffic bound elsewhere. In light of the growing recognition of the causative role combustion engines play in Global Warming, In response, some members of~~ the public has have brought pressure to bear on the LADWP to change

the Festival into a non-automotive event. In 2007, a five-day all-walking pilot program was held and judged a success. In keeping with Griffith Park's Urban Wilderness Identity and its fundamental purpose of providing for exercise and social interaction in a healthful environment, ~~from this point forward~~ the Light Festival should become an event ~~exclusively focused on~~ pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians (with provision for ADA compliance) that encourages green and healthy habits.

4. The Bureau of Sanitation, Department of Public Works

The Bureau of Sanitation is responsible for waste water and solid waste collection and treatment. Thousands of tons of solid wastes are generated in Griffith Park annually. With numerous landfills being closed in the near future, concepts for waste mitigation and recycling should be studied. In particular, there is a high potential for the recycling of plant and earthen materials.

The Bureau of Sanitation has responsibility for watershed protection. The receiving body of water is mostly the Los Angeles River, which is in close proximity to the Park. "Cleansing" of runoff from golf course watering, Zoo maintenance and storm water must be accomplished in short order for this water to reach acceptable standards. The Bureau is responsible for implementing some of the projects funded by Project O funds that became available to help meet Federal Clean Water Act requirements. One such project is proposed for the Zoo parking lot, where permeable parking surfaces, swales and natural filtration remedies will collect polluted water before it reaches the Los Angeles River.

The Bureau of Sanitation manages Toyon Landfill, a 97-acre area located within the interior of the Park. Despite the objections of the public and a lawsuit filed by the Griffith Family, in 1957 the City turned what was a pristine area of the Park into a municipal dump. Toyon has been filled and is currently in the process of being closed. The City has a longstanding agreement with the community that once the area is closed, settled and certified as safe, it will be reforested as a natural, low-intensity meadow for passive recreational use. At the present time, the area has an electrical generating station and a flare station. The Department receives royalty payments for the energy produced by the private firm that operates these systems.

5. Department of General Services

The website of the Department of General Services states that its mission:

“ . . . is a competent and motivated workforce in order to provide City leadership in managing facilities, equipment, supplies, security, communication, maintenance, and other support services for city departments in a safe, reliable, and efficient manner.”

The Department of General Services has historically been the principal manager of buildings, facilities, equipment, fleets, supplies, property, security, communication and other support services for other City departments. More recently, the City established an Office of Public Safety (“OPS”) within the Department of General Services. The intent was to streamline security services for various departments including Libraries, Community Redevelopment Agency, Zoo, Convention Center, and Department of Recreation and Parks. Memoranda of Understanding (“MOU”) were established with each of these departments. An MOU with LAPD was also negotiated that limits encroachment on the traditional law enforcement roles and duties of the LAPD. A civilian oversight provision was also established for the unit.

With respect to Griffith Park, the public expressed concerns with the prospect of having security officers rather than Park Rangers. The police-like appearance of OPS is less friendly than that of a Ranger in traditional park garb and is inconsistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity. Also, OPS officers are specialists in security and may not serve well in other roles, such as providing education regarding nature, the environment, or specific knowledge of Griffith Park. Rangers assigned specifically to Griffith Park are more capable of responding to in a timely manner to rescues, fires and other critical, unique Park situations.

With the implementation of OPS security operations in Griffith Park, the blurring of responsibilities between OPS and Rangers has been a significant problem. The MOU shows 80 of 170 activities as being a shared responsibility between OPS and Park Rangers. Despite these problems, OPS does serve the function of supplementing some of the day-to-day security functions previously handled by Park Rangers. With the current arrangement, the Rangers’ role in Griffith Park should be increasingly recognized as one of protector, educator and steward for the vast resources of Griffith Park.

6. Elected Officials

Griffith Park is located within Los Angeles City Council District Four. Because City Departments are ultimately responsible to the City Council, employees of the Department regularly and -consistently work with the council person and staff from Council District Four in all matters related to Griffith Park. [As was the case with the](#)

~~use of funds from the Glendale Litigation, this often appears to result in decisions being made as to the use of Park resources and Park management between the Department and Council District Four with little opportunity for public input or review. In practice, there does not appear to currently be any effective system in place to ensure that Department employees are able, with impunity, to withstand or deny requests that come from elected officials for specific uses of Park resources.~~

B. Other Entities with Specialized Relationships to the Park

In addition to the above-described City Departments, there are other entities created as a result of law or City action that have a direct relationship to, and impact on, the Park.

1. The Greater Los Angeles Zoo

After more than 80 years of operation by the City department responsible for its parks, in 1992 the Municipal Zoo became a separate department of the City of Los Angeles. In so doing, the Zoo gained direct control of its 113-acre site within Griffith Park. Because it is now a separate department, the Zoo has made changes and implemented alterations that have had an immediate impact on the overall natural Park setting. By way of example, the Zoo has periodically attempted to gain additional Park land for various expansions, including its successful acquisition of part of the Mineral Wells picnic area for a new veterinary hospital. Its new signage, a large, brightly lit electrified sign, is in direct contrast to the signage used elsewhere in the Park. It fails to blend in with any other aspect of the Park and is contrary to the design considerations discussed in this [Master-Vision](#) Plan. When the Zoo expanded outward onto Zoo Drive, the road and trail closure displaced bicyclists and runners from what was a relatively safe route. The Zoo continues to express desires to increase revenues by adding new exhibits and that desire, coupled with pressure from various individuals and groups to enlarge existing exhibits, ~~continues to~~ creates a strain between the Zoo and protecting the Urban Wilderness Identity and space of the Park.

2. The Griffith Observatory

The Griffith Observatory is an essential feature of the Park and was one of Colonel Griffith's original visions for the Park. Construction began in 1933 and was completed in 1935. In 2002, the Observatory was closed for a major renovation. It

reopened in 2006. The Director of the Observatory and its staff work for the Department of Recreation and Parks.

3. Zoo Magnet School

Pursuant to an arrangement between the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Department of Recreation and Parks, there is a small high school magnet program currently housed in temporary buildings close to the Zoo. The curriculum offered in the magnet program is of a college preparatory level focusing on animal studies and biological sciences. Approximately 300 students in grades nine through twelve participate in the program, with the students in grades nine and ten taking all of their required courses at North Hollywood High School and some electives at the Zoo site, and the students in grades eleven and twelve taking all courses, except some electives or specialized courses such as drama, at the Zoo site. The Zoo site currently has three portable bungalows with a total of ten classrooms.

4. Griffith Park Natural History Survey

The Department of Recreation and Parks recently entered into a joint effort with the Franklin Hills Residents Association to conduct a natural history survey of the Park and provide knowledge about the Park's wildlife and natural resources. Among other things, the Natural History Survey seeks to provide information for informed stewardship of the Park's ecosystems.⁵⁸

5. Lessees And Concessionaires

The Department and the City regularly enter into leases or contracts with groups and individuals that impact the Park. These lessees are not currently clearly identified as being under the direct control of the Griffith Region. Given the significant role these lessees and concessionaires play in the life of the Park and the appearance it presents, it is crucial that Park management has the right to control these lease and concession agreements in order to ensure that the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park is protected. All leases and concession agreements must provide that the lessees and concessionaires understand and agree to comply with directives from Park management that are necessary to protect the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.

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See Appendix 25 hereto.

A variety of contract-governed concessionaires provide services to Griffith Park visitors. The individuals and companies who operate these concessions – its pony rides, bicycle and golf cart rentals, refreshment sales, the Greek Theatre, and the Los Angeles Equestrian Center, to name just a few - vie for the opportunity to do so through the City's Request for Proposal ("RFP") process, a competitive program managed by the Contracts Division of Recreation and Parks. In order to promote and preserve Griffith Park's historic function and character, it is vital that its concessionaires embrace and maintain its Urban Wilderness Identity through both the physical aspects as well as the conduct and programming of the facilities they acquire the right to operate.

There are two entities that are major lessees within the Park – the Autry National Center and The Greek Theatre – whose activities have a major impact on the Park. Any management plan must provide a structure permitting these lessees and the Department of Recreation and Parks to work together to ensure preservation of the Park's overall Urban Wilderness Identity.

a. The Autry National Center

In 1987, the City of Los Angeles leased ten acres of flat, dedicated parkland that formed a picnic and free play area called "Pine Meadows" situated across from the Zoo to the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum (now Autry National Center). In 2003, the Autry acquired the Southwest Museum and set about developing plans to expand its facility in Griffith Park. Although contractually required to remain within its original leasehold, the expansion of the Autry building will have a direct impact on the Park both while it is being built and thereafter in terms of traffic in and out of the Park, displacement of current Park users and decreased green open space and potential disruption of wildlife corridors. As this is being written, current plans include the Park's first "parking structure." Although ample parking will be available in the surface parking of the Autry and the Zoo, it is currently being asserted that such a structure is required by existing building codes of the City of Los Angeles.

b. The Greek Theatre

The Greek Theatre was completed in 1930, but was not regularly used until the 1950s when James Doolittle entered into an agreement with the City of Los Angeles to provide upgrades for the Theatre so that shows could be presented on a more regular basis. In 1975, the Nederlander family became the leaseholder and despite efforts by the House of Blues in 2000 to obtain the lease, Nederlander eventually won approval from the City to continue its operation of the Greek Theatre.

The Theatre occupies 82.65 acres of land and on nights of performances, at least 2500 cars can be stack parked in and around the Theatre. Traffic to and from the Greek Theatre remains a constant source of discussion for both those attending events at the Theatre as well as the surrounding neighborhood. Efficient use of park and shuttle systems, such as those used for the Hollywood Bowl, with parking at the Zoo Parking lot, would ease parking for those attending the Theatre as well as decrease the negative impact on the Park created by the parking needed for those driving to Theatre events.

6. Neighborhood Councils, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment

The creation of a citywide system of grassroots neighborhood councils designed to make government more responsive to local needs was a centerpiece of the City Charter approved by the citizens of Los Angeles in June 1999. Article IX of the Charter creates the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and assigns to it the responsibility for ensuring that there are neighborhood councils. Section 908 of Article IX specifically provides that neighborhood councils shall monitor the delivery of City services in their respective areas and have periodic meetings with responsible officials of City departments, subject to their reasonable availability.

There are three neighborhood councils contiguous to Griffith Park: (1) Atwater Village, (2) Greater Griffith Park, and (3) Hollywood United. These councils work together through a Parks, River and Open Space Committee ("PROS") to advise and consult with the Department on issues related to Griffith Park. PROS includes individuals from all three of the contiguous neighborhood councils, local resident associations, recreational groups, friends and other groups as well as individual stakeholders. All meetings of PROS are Brown Act noticed and all of its meetings are open to the general public.

7. Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust

Although not created by City government, the Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust is responsible for the very existence of the Park. The Trust has made consistent efforts to protect the basic premise underlying the Colonel's gift and to support ongoing activities in the Park. It has contributed generously to the Park, including providing funding for construction of the Greek Theatre and Griffith Observatory as well as the Tregnan Golf Academy. Recently, it substantially contributed to remodeling of the Ranger Station Visitor Center and the financing and upkeep of the monument to Colonel Griffith located at the Park's Los Feliz entrance.

During the preparation of this Master Plan, it also funded a study to support the effort to have the Park designated as a City of Los Angeles Historical-Cultural Monument.

III. POTENTIAL OVERALL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

A. Managing an Urban Wilderness

The philosophy and specific goals and objectives for managing Griffith Park's Urban Wilderness Identity are detailed throughout the chapters of this [Master Vision Plan](#). In addition to establishing priorities and benchmarks for successful stewardship, these chapters place particular emphasis on ensuring that Park management and staff are well educated in the meaning and intent of the Urban Wilderness Identity and what is necessary to ensure the implementation of that Identity. It is [also essential that the Park management structure insulate Department employees from the need to respond to pressures from elected officials that are contrary to the overall Master Plan design and, most importantly, to ensure viable and active involvement of community representatives, free from political pressure,](#) in the decision-making regarding the use of Park resources and assets.

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~~The Melendrez Master Plan Draft examined three alternative management structures for Griffith Park~~[This Plan examines four alternative management structures for Griffith Park](#): (1) creating a discrete new City Department responsible for only Griffith Park, (2) Assigning management of Griffith Park to a private, non-profit organization, ~~and~~ (3) Appointing a Department Manager or Superintendent with sole responsibility for the operation of Griffith Park, ~~or (4) There is a fourth alternative considered by this Master Plan: modifying~~ [Modifying](#) the Department's current structure to provide specialized management for the City's twelve Parks, including Griffith Park, that are regional parks. This could be accomplished either through the creation of a new Regional Park Division or by creating Regional Park subdivisions within the existing Metro, Valley, [West](#) and Pacific Regions. This alternative was already rejected by the Department, but because of the complexities involved in effectively managing all the diverse interests that converge on Griffith Park and ensuring protection of the Urban Wilderness Identity, this [Master Vision Plan](#), to ensure protection of the Urban Wilderness Identity, urges that Griffith Park have a dedicated Superintendent responsible only for Griffith Park.

B. Discrete City Department

As a discrete department within the City, Griffith Park would lose the advantages of shared staffing, maintenance and equipment, and would probably need to develop revenue streams to offset that loss. Independent management as a

discrete department would also necessitate an expansion of the Park's existing bureaucratic structure and a corresponding increase in salaries and related overhead costs. Griffith Park is a regional park: one property in an integrated system of recreational venues that offers the public a wide range of experiences and services. Independent operation would obscure the role the Park plays in that system and its unique contribution to the City's recreational fabric. Moreover, operating Griffith Park in isolation would inevitably lead to an inequitable allocation of resources, potential monolithic control, a loss of public oversight and potential privatization of the Park's valuable assets.

C. Private Non-profit Group

Were the Park a City-owned asset managed by a private, non-profit group, the public would lose control of the Park's destiny and have no assurance of any better management or outcomes. Promoters of this option often use New York's Central Park Conservancy, which has contracted with the City of New York to manage Central Park, as an example of a successful implementation of this model. However, prior to its contract, the Conservancy had a long established altruistic record of restoration and assistance to projects within Central Park and successful fund-raising for Central Park. The Conservancy is based in, and generates support from, a uniquely New York philanthropic culture and the private wealth that surrounds Central Park. Griffith Park is not in a corresponding position. There is no equivalent non-profit with a track record matching that of the Central Park Conservancy, nor is Griffith Park surrounded by, and viewed by, the type of high-rise apartment buildings that surround Central Park. Such an option is not viable within the City of Los Angeles.

This is particularly true given that Griffith Park is to be protected as an Urban Wilderness. In New York City, for example, in the absence of established organizations with fund-raising ability such as the Conservancy, private non-profits for other parks have had to give up parkland for the sole purpose of being able to maintain a small portion of the Park. Bryant Park regularly evicts users to make way for large corporate events. The Hudson River Trust is considering permitting extensive commercial development on parkland as a means to fund improvements. Residents of New York have been forced to form a Brooklyn Bridge Park Defense Fund to sue the City of New York in an effort to prevent the erection of 1,000 high-rise apartments on parkland. Given that Los Angeles has an historical propensity for linking public lands and amenities with large-scale real estate development, private operation of Los Angeles parks, and in particular Griffith Park, should be avoided.

D. Executive Position with Department

While creating an executive position with responsibility only for Griffith Park would be the optimum approach to the management of the Park, current leadership in the Department do not view this as a realistically achievable goal. The Department representatives report that the Department lacks the financial resources to fund such a position and there is insufficient political support to obtain the resources from the general fund. ~~The position of Griffith Park Superintendent created by the Department in 2006 is specifically not a position with responsibility only for Griffith Park. To the contrary, the responsibilities of this individual include managing such diverse elements as the camps in Griffith Park, the Santa Monica Mountains, the Angeles National Forest, the San Bernardino Mountains and Mammoth Lakes, and the parking structure at Pershing Square. Although seemingly well-intentioned, the Griffith Park Superintendent position continues to leave Griffith Park without a dedicated manager or individual whose responsibility is exclusively related to regional parks.~~ Although it is understood that the current leadership of the Department do not view a dedicated manager for the Park as realistic, this [Master Vision](#) Plan envisions such a position as the appropriate management structure and urges that such a position be created.

E. Regional Park Division

Organizing Griffith Park and its sister regional parks into a new Regional Parks Division (or, alternatively, ~~three~~ [four](#) Regional Park Subdivisions within the Department's existing ~~three~~ [four](#) geographic regions) appears to be a step toward better management of the City's most unique and challenging Park properties. Within the Public Recreation Element of the Los Angeles General Plan, a distinction is drawn between Regional Parks and Neighborhood and Community Parks. Neighborhood and Community Parks have the purpose of providing places for organized recreation such as active sports and games, and direct neighborhood activities. Regional Parks are described in the General Plan as "specialized recreation facilities such as lakes, golf courses, campgrounds, wilderness areas and museums, which normally serve people living throughout the Los Angeles basin. A regional park may include or emphasize exceptional scenic attractions." The commonality of issues that arise in regional parks makes them logical foci for this type of organization. In addition to fostering specific management skills, such an organizational approach justifies the funding for specialized positions that are either at-risk or completely lacking, such as park rangers, wildlife officers, urban foresters, ecologists, arborists and master gardeners.

Included at Appendix 19 is a chart illustrating the common features of the City's twelve Regional Parks.⁵⁹ All of these Parks offer visitors unique scenic attractions, unstructured open space, intact ecosystems, opportunities for wildlife viewing and trails for walking, hiking and running. Nearly all contain water features, extensive areas for picnicking and historic assets. Many include equestrian usage, bicycle lanes, golf courses and major attractions such as museums.

Should a single Regional Parks Division present problems of distance, Regional Parks Subdivisions within the ~~three-four~~ existing geographic divisions are a viable alternative. The regional parks group naturally within the ~~three-four~~ Metro, Valley, West and Pacific regions. Griffith, Elysian, Debs and Runyon Canyon fall within the Metro Region. In northeast Los Angeles, such a grouping is an impetus to implement the General Plan's recommendation that an extended green belt and recreation corridor be created through trails, bike paths and wildlife passages connecting Griffith, Elysian and Debs Parks. Such linkages, which also connect to the Los Angeles River and Arroyo Seco will provide increased recreation for a relatively small investment of resources, and are a substantial benefit that supports this model of management.

IV. SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

Any management structure for Griffith Park must take into account, and provide for, a variety of specific concerns and issues. Those concerns and issues include the elements discussed below.

A. Maintaining and Utilizing Strategic Information

There is currently a lack of valid statistical information about the Park, its users and its management. Effective management and stewardship require adequate and accurate information. Without such information, there is no real basis for developing planning and funding strategies or for pursuing appropriate funding sources. An essential element of any management plan is provision for the collection, collation

⁵⁹ Those twelve parks include Griffith, Elysian, Debs, Runyon Canyon, Sepulveda Basin, Hansen Dam, Verdugo Mountains, O'Melveny, Harbor, The Angel's Gate/Point Fermin/Cabrillo nexus and Venice Beach.

and use of valid statistical information as to the Park's users, revenue generation, animal populations, facilities and needs.

Such information will inform the Department, City policymakers and the community as to the levels of usage, impact of usage, and characteristics of Park uses, as well as the costs and funding levels required to maintain the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity. Among other things, the information collected needs to include information as to the Park usage categorized by user, facility, season, cost, impact on ecosystems and any other data necessary to maintain the Park consistent with its Urban Wilderness Identity.

Existing research demonstrates that open space and recreational facilities contribute to a local economy and the quality of life in a manner that generates economic and fiscal benefits for the local area. Documentation of the social and economic value of Griffith Park will help motivate the community to contribute to the preservation of the Park and the benefit it provides. Moreover, such data will make a strong case for enhancing the resources that might be necessary to implement an appropriate master plan for preserving the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park. Among the benefits that can be studied are cleaner air, reduced health costs arising from a decrease in the sedentary syndrome, and outdoor classroom learning opportunities. The data can provide a basis for seeking funds from agencies such as the Southern California Air Quality Management District or Environmental Protection Agency for such things as reforestation projects and increased access to public transit.

B. Park Security

In 2004, the City unveiled its plan to create a new Office of Public Safety ("OPS"). The plan proposed a new pool of patrol-car-based officers who would respond to complaints at the City's libraries, public buildings, convention center, parks and zoo, and who would be employed by and report to the General Services Division. The plan, as presented, would have eliminated Park Rangers as a classification within the Department and Griffith Park. After lengthy advocacy on the part of concerned Park users, the City amended the plan to provide for the retention of a discrete corps of Park Rangers employed by the Department to be based in the City's large regional parks with complex terrain, facilities and usage. The sophisticated, integrated skills of Park Rangers, including trail safety and firefighting, were deemed essential to effective Park services and management. Currently, OPS officers work alongside the Department's Regional Park Rangers based in Griffith Park. Any management structure must provide a mechanism for involving these officers and their management in an understanding of the physical layout of the

Park, the resources of the Park, and the implementation of decisions made regarding security within Griffith Park. For purposes of effective management, consideration should be given to having some specific security officers given a primary assignment to Griffith Park so that they can become familiar with the Park and provide support for security officers who do not have such a primary assignment. These individuals should also report to both the Park Supervisor and the General Services Division.

C. Park Maintenance

Maintaining Griffith Park and its resources in an effective and efficient manner must be a core concern for any management structure. This includes both the day-to-day maintenance needs of the Park as well as what can best be termed “high risk maintenance.”

1. Current Maintenance Concerns

In 2006, the City Controller’s office prepared an audit of Recreation and Parks maintenance activities. In that audit, a description was given of practices that were identified as a “run to failure” syndrome found in various of the parks and facilities under the jurisdiction of Recreation and Parks. An example of this syndrome is Fern Dell. Created in 1917, this City of Los Angeles Cultural-Historical Monument was one of the most enchanting spots in the Park, if not the City. Although efforts were made in the late 1980s to rehabilitate the area, that work was not maintained and, instead, the area has been permitted to “run to failure” leaving plants, ponds, historic bridges, benches and paths in a state of decay, -with large sections of denuded grounds. This same “run to failure” syndrome was apparent in the Bird Sanctuary in Vermont Canyon. It was also occurring at Griffith Observatory prior to its recent renovation.

The Park’s natural areas are often run to failure by using them as “lay down areas” for equipment and supplies for some project. Once used as a lay down area, the area is generally left devoid of a healthy plant community and becomes nothing more than a dustbowl. Examples of this can be seen in both Western Canyon and Commonwealth Canyon. The Department’s management ~~has announced that it~~ is aware of the problem and hopes to set in place a maintenance system that moves from this syndrome to practices consistent with the best practices for current park management. To accomplish this goal, there must be primary responsibility assigned to specific individuals who can be held accountable for implementing effective maintenance practices. Without such accountability, the “run to failure” syndrome is active and alive within the Park ~~with and, for example, such things as~~

~~many linear feet of chain link fencing suddenly and with impunity suddenly appearing beside a road or public area where it may remain for days, weeks or even months.~~ Such practices can only be brought under control by a highly structured, effectively managed maintenance unit.

2. Essentials of Maintenance Program

Both a systematic approach to upkeep and a dedicated maintenance staff taking personal responsibility for, and pride in, its work are needed to maintain Griffith Park's complex system of landscapes, biological resources, infrastructure and facilities. Sensitivity to the Park and its natural state is of utmost importance. As a repository of civic and cultural memory, Griffith Park's maintenance staff should prioritize restoration and rehabilitation over replacement of existing built facilities and features. Maintenance of the Park's natural state, consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity, is essential to avoid unwarranted habitat destruction and harm to the Park's ecosystems. Included in the maintenance plan ~~must~~ should be a provision for permitting the existing facilities, and particularly the Park's sports fields, to rest and regenerate. In the absence of such a system, the facilities are in constant use resulting in their destruction and then necessitating costly rebuilding instead of timely maintenance and repairs.

3. High-Risk Maintenance Activities

Unwarranted habitat destruction has occurred in Griffith Park due to heavy equipment projects that went beyond the scope originally intended or needed, or through misunderstandings and mistakes made by the equipment operators. In recent times, multiple occurrences of accidental destruction of endangered species, including Nevin's Barberry, document the caution that must be exercised by maintenance personnel.

Examples of high-risk activities include things such as heavy equipment usage, chemical spraying, tree cutting over large areas, and fire control brush clearance. For all such activities, the Department must be ultimately responsible and accountable for the activities without regard to whether they are conducted by the Department staff, an outside agency or a contractor. Whether considered routine or not, for such high-risk activities, accountability and approval should go beyond the normal approval process. Environmental experts ~~must~~ should be fully apprised of any such event in its entirety. If a staff ecologist is not available, an outside consultant should be hired. Once the project begins, the Department management must make sure there are periodic inspections of the site. ~~And w~~Work

that is beyond what has been approved – or not proceeding in the manner approved – must be immediately addressed and cured. ~~Brush clearance, whether mandated by the Fire Department or elective, must be reviewed by appropriate environmental employees or consultants to scrutinize ecology, geology and water run-off issues.~~

~~All high-risk maintenance activities must give high priority to the preservation of native ecology in the impacted area. A project that does cause habitat destruction should have a written specific plan of action for restoration of the native habitat and should also allocate funds for that restoration.~~

4. Maintenance Staffing

The Park's maintenance staff should be spread among individuals who possess technical capabilities (e.g., water management), construction workers, gardeners and craftsmen (e.g., repairs to historic features), specialized knowledge (e.g., removal of invasive species) and communication skills (e.g., providing information and interacting with the public.)

Moreover, a different gardener with appropriate skills, background and training should each be specifically assigned to a clearly identified zone or zones within Griffith Park. These individuals ~~will~~ would be accountable for their zone or zones and thereby given incentive to take pride in his or her work and “ownership” of his or her zone. She or he can provide the oversight for others working within that zone as well as acting in a liaison or guide position for the public and specific user groups such as golfers. These individuals can be responsible for ensuring that instructions about various projects are clearly understood and carried out in a manner consistent with a pre-approved plan, particularly when such projects involve the use of heavy equipment, chemical spraying, tree cutting or other activities, whether undertaken by the Department, the Fire Department or other agencies, that can lead to the destruction of a large amount of native vegetation.

At the present time, the Park is lacking a system designed to ensure that maintenance, routine or otherwise, is performed in a way that will avoid unwarranted habitat destruction or negative impacts to the Park's natural ecosystems. Individuals assigned to specific areas of the Park will help to address that concern as will an appropriate “team” of Park employees.

Working with a staff ecologist, or an outside ecologist if none is available on the staff, the responsible zone gardener, the Park maintenance manager, and the General Manager responsible for the Park should be responsible for carefully reviewing such projects and making periodic inspections of the site to make sure that

the project is being carried out in the manner contemplated. Even brush clearance, ~~whether mandated by the Fire Department or internally scheduled, must~~should be reviewed by this team to ensure that adequate and appropriate attention has been paid to issues of ecology, geology and water run-off. Before approving any maintenance that will result in the destruction of native habitat, a specific plan ~~must~~should be developed for restoration of the habitat, including the source of funds for the restoration.

D. Non-native Gardens⁶⁰

There are three grandfathered non-native gardens in Griffith Park that arose without any formal planning or approval from Park management. These areas - Amir's Garden, Dante's View and Captain's Roost - have come to serve various needs of Park users, including shady rest stops for hikers and equestrians, picnicking and education. These are areas where native vegetation has either been replaced or supplemented with non-native species and now require special care for their protection and viability. In the absence of such care, quick deterioration occurs.

These areas may not be wholly consistent with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity, but are enjoyed by many for their cool shade and because the builders and maintainers of these sites have become folk heroes. These areas were developed

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~~It is of concern to the Working Group that, as this is being written, information exists which seems to indicate that a decision has been made between Council District Four and Recreation and Parks to permit what is reported by various sources as somewhere between one to two acres to as much as 200 acres in the interior, wilderness area of the Park, for the exclusive use of a local Korean community group that intends to plant a "Korean Garden" on those acres. A specific dedication of acreage not only raises questions of the "giving" of public land for private purposes, it also runs totally contrary to the vision of this Master, This Vision Plan~~
to promote an ecologically sound, coherent aesthetic for the Park that avoids further plantings of non-native species. There are other public areas, such as Barnsdall Park for example, that would be more fitting and appropriate for the introduction of non-native plantings and would not involve the loss of valuable Urban Wilderness land.

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prior to the public awareness of heightened interest in preserving native habitat. These volunteer gardens have become part of the Park's history and lore, but Park management must ensure that no further non-native gardens of this type are developed in the Park since doing so is contrary to the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity and potentially harmful to the native habitat.

Each of these existing areas should be clearly defined in a formal status statement by the Department. Precise physical boundaries as well as a description of all resources contained within the area, including vegetation, and the policy for the care of each area should be included. Formal steward-caretaker roles should be established independently for each resource, taking into consideration the unique needs of each area, upkeep needs, management, and security and safety. Policies for the selection of stewards, funding and lines of authority should also be established in the written policy and, whenever possible, non-native plantings removed from such areas. If following the recent fire, Dante's View and Captain's Roost are to be restored, it is best done with native plantings and construction materials consistent with the natural Park environment.

E. Noise Pollution

Parks are places to escape urban sounds and to enjoy the more subtle sounds of nature such as bird chatter and rustling leaves. The "soundscape" of nature provides relief from the normal urban experience and presents a special concern for management of Griffith Park.

In healthy ecosystems, animals of many kinds occupy well-defined sonic zones and bandwidths. Man has the ability to produce sounds with such things as helicopters, cars, musical instruments and voices that cover the entire audible and inaudible bandwidth, thus interfering with and obscuring sonic zones of wildlife. Current research over a wide variety of species validates that noise can, and does, impact an animal's behavior and physiology.

In Griffith Park, some of the major interior roads have been closed to vehicular traffic. Acoustically, this has been a windfall for both wildlife and people using the Park. That alone is reason enough to continue to keep those interior roads closed. Freeway noise from both the 134 Freeway and Interstate 5 impact equestrians, runners and picnickers in the areas adjacent to these freeways. Landscaped berms along some areas of the 134 Freeway have proven to be a highly effective means for mitigating the freeway noise, and consideration should be given to installing such berms in other areas. Sound walls should be erected where berms are not possible. All such berms and sound walls must, of course, be designed consistent with the

obligation to maintain and ensure necessary and appropriate wildlife corridors and with involvement, support and funding from the California Department of Transportation.

Helicopters are another source of noise pollution for the Park and its users. The Federal Aviation Administration does not impose any rules as to the minimum altitude for helicopters and, therefore, it will be necessary for Park management to engage in outreach and public education as to the negative impact on the Park and its users of the sound created by helicopters flying over. By eliminating such things as the current fly-overs that are used for various City functions, Park management can begin to set an example for those private entities, like TV networks, that frequently swoop in front of the Hollywood sign or zoom in on trail-runners for live action shots at the beginning of newscasts.

F. Dogs

In compliance with Municipal Code Section 53.06.02, in consideration of other Park users and out of concern for potential liability and the safety of their pets, the majority of dog owners who bring their pets to the Park abide by the City's leash law. Unfortunately, those that ignore the Municipal Code seem unaware that, in addition to human and financial risks, off-leash dogs have a destructive impact on the Park's wildlife and native plant communities as well as the watershed. In a recent assessment, the Griffith Park Natural History Survey found unexpectedly low biodiversity results in the Park's Brush Canyon area. This area of the Park has a higher than normal incidence of non-compliance with leash laws when compared to other non-burn areas of the Park.

Park management should develop a comprehensive educational program and a leash enforcement protocol. Information about the importance of maintaining dogs on leash for public and environmental safety and the need to pick up dog defecation to prevent health hazards and pollution of the Park's streams, springs, river and drainage should be made available throughout the Park. This should include brochures at the Ranger Stations, at major facilities, and at the Park's specifically designated off-leash area, the Griffith Park Dog Park.

Priority attention and maintenance should be given to the off-leash Dog Park near the Ferraro Soccer Complex. Proper maintenance includes periodic closure for reconditioning so that there is a pleasant, grassy area for the dogs to run and play. In keeping with the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity, it is important to keep this area as the Park's sole off-leash area, one that is guided by the best environmental and managerial practices possible.

V. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A. In General

An element essential to protecting the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity is effective community involvement. Such involvement not only ensures protection of the Park's rare assets for generations to come, it creates a sense of community and a shared and enhanced appreciation of the limited and fragile resources inherent in public open spaces. It also maintains the fundamental integrity of the decision-making process and the opportunity for volunteers, volunteer support groups and non-profit organizations and associations to be involved in a common cause: preservation of the Park's unique resource as an Urban Wilderness.

Care must be taken to ensure that decisions made about the Park and the use of all of its resources take place in a manner that is open to the public and fully transparent. No single individual or group, ~~however powerful,~~ should be given the ability to ~~decree that some decide upon any~~ project ~~or other, or some area or other, is going to take on a particular purpose or be used for a particular group or groups of individuals~~ unless and until a public process is utilized that permits public participation in the suggested use. In the absence of such a management structure, the unique resources of the Park can quickly become fragmented among various interest groups and it can lose forever the overall natural setting which makes it so unique and valuable.

B. Lessons From May 2007 Fire

On May 8-9, 2007, the worst fire in Griffith Park in a half-century destroyed more than twenty-five percent of the Park's wilderness. The response to the fire presents a learning experience for ensuring community involvement in the protection of the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.

The fire focused attention on the Park's established role as the City's great Urban Wilderness. In the days and weeks following the disaster, the question that dominated the public and media discussion was not whether the Park's natural areas should be restored, but how much human intervention would be necessary to restore those natural areas. The blaze also made clear the ~~folly of inherent risk in~~ creating newly built facilities that cannot withstand fire in a park where fire is part of the life cycle.

Although fire was a predicable event, until 1997 the City had no plans in place to replace, modify or otherwise upgrade what were then obsolete water systems within the Park. Beginning in late 1996 and continuing throughout 1997, a local organization, the Los Feliz Improvement Association, mounted a campaign to bring to light the dire condition of the Park's water system and its need for immediate rehabilitation. That campaign was instrumental in a decision to transfer the Park's water system to the LADWP and the dedication in 2004 of a \$34 million, modernized water system for the Park. In the aftermath of the May 8-9, 2007, fire, City officials credited the new water system with saving the entire Park and its surrounding community from complete destruction.

The role of Rangers from the Recreation and Parks Department on the fire lines and in the Park recovery has also been essential to public safety and security. That the Rangers even exist is the result of vigorous grassroots efforts of Griffith Park- area community and recreation groups and neighborhood councils. In 2003, these groups and organizations joined forces to convince the City that its plan to eliminate Park Rangers from the Department would negatively impact regional parks such as Griffith Park. Among the arguments made in that effort was a recognition that Park Rangers were are essential for fire safety and protection. This advocacy demonstrates, yet again, that community involvement is an essential force for good in the management of Griffith Park.

A lesson also learned, however, from the May 2007 fire is that there simply is no current system of in place to ensuring that Griffith Park remains free from special interest projects and that decisions regarding the use of Park resources are made in a transparent manner consistent with maintaining the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park. For example, it is essential to the Park's overall integrity that no further non-native gardens be introduced into the Park, yet as part of the "fire-recovery" discussion, consideration has been given to planting new non-native gardens. To ensure that any decisions about what is placed in the Park is consistent with the preservation of the Park's fundamental identity as an Urban Wilderness, there must be a Citizen's Park Advisory Board with the authority and ability to review and recommend what is, and is not, added to or changed within the Park.

C. Citizens Park Advisory Board

Griffith Park is one element of a system of 385-415 parks and recreation centers scattered across the Los Angeles basin. Its size, physical assets and wilderness areas draw people from around the region for a variety of events, cultural events and passive and active recreational opportunities, including what Colonel Griffith intended: respite from the concrete of the City. It is also a unique piece of real

estate in a particular area of the City whose facilities and usage disproportionately affect those who live and work in its environs.

To provide for an involved community and the protection of the Park as an Urban Wilderness, there must be a Citizens Park Advisory Board composed of individuals with broad interests in the Park and its uses. ~~Such a Board should, if required by law, be established by the Recreation and Parks Board of Commissioners. That Board should ensure that the Citizens Advisory Board has funds and technical assistance in an amount and type sufficient to permit it to carry out its responsibilities and to publicize its activities, conclusions and recommendations.~~ All meetings of the Citizens Park Advisory Board should be open to the public and it should issue regular reports as to its activities at least every other month of the calendar year. Minutes of its meetings should be kept and made available to the public, and all documents and reports it issues should be a matter of public record and be made available in a timely fashion on an internet site maintained by Recreation and Parks. It should function under the State of California's Open Public Meeting Act, commonly referred to as the "Brown Act," and thereby ensure its proceedings are public, open, transparent and orderly.

~~Care should be taken to ensure that the members of the Citizens Advisory Board are not selected or appointed by any elected City or State official or by the Department or the Recreation and Parks Board of Commissioners.~~ The Citizens Park Advisory Board will consist of ~~at least twenty (20)~~an odd number of members to serve for a term of two years without compensation and for no more than two consecutive terms. ~~Although~~The neighborhood councils, organizations representative of, and elected by the community they represent that abut or are on the boundaries of the Park and the three existing neighborhood associations that have long relationships with the Park and its management will work with Park management to recommend~~select the~~ members of the Citizens Park Advisory Board, ~~they must and will~~ do so ~~in such a way that there is a broad representation of all of the various Park user groups. To that end, the neighborhood councils that abut, or are on the boundaries of, Griffith Park, the Los Feliz Improvement Association and the Oaks Homeowners Association will each select four members~~ in such a manner as to ensure that among the totality of the members selected there is:

1. At least one member active in a senior citizens' organization;
2. At least one member active in an organized golf association;
3. At least one member active in an organized conservation organization;

4. At least one member active in an organized group supporting arts within the Park;
5. At least one member active in an organized equestrian group;
6. At least one member active in an organized sports activity;
7. At least one member active in an organized outdoor recreational group;
8. At least one member active in an organized environmental preservation group;
9. At least one member active in wildlife preservation; and
10. At least one member representative of organized youth activities.

All other members shall be members of the Los Angeles community with an interest in, and knowledge of, the Park ~~and its Master Plan.~~

The duties and responsibilities of the ~~Citizens Park~~ Advisory Board should include at least the following:

1. Receiving information from the Department as to plans for using any and all of the Park's natural and built resources;
2. Informing the public concerning the use of Park resources, both natural and built;
3. Active reviewing and reporting on the expenditure of funds for Griffith Park;
4. Providing information to the public as to whether or not the ~~Master Vision~~ Plan is being implemented;
5. Ensuring that expenditures within Griffith Park, from whatever source, are consistent with the ~~Master Vision~~ Plan;
6. Receiving and reviewing all information related to activities within Griffith Park, including leases, concessions, maintenance needs, activities, construction

and advance planning activities;

7. Inspecting Griffith Park facilities and resources to ensure that the Master-Vision Plan is being implemented; ~~and~~
8. Recommending use of Griffith Park resources that are consistent with the Master-Vision Plan;:-
9. Advocates for Griffith Park within the larger community;
10. Fundraising activities to support the Vision Plan for Griffith Park; and
11. Educational campaigns to inform the public on Griffith Park's unique character.

As set forth herein, there is an urgent need for functional, cohesive citizen involvement for the Park if its natural state is to be preserved. As this is written, no such recognized involvement exists other than through the Working Group drafting this document. Until such time as the Citizens Park Advisory Board is functional, the Working Group should remain in place and continue to work with the Department on the myriad issues and concerns facing the Department as it works to rehabilitate the Park from the May 2007 fires and to ensure that the natural state of the Park is preserved.

VI. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

The amount of economic resources ~~beyond what is available through the City's General Fund~~ necessary to implement and manage Griffith Park will need to be determined based on the statistical information gathered as a result of the recommendations contained above and the Department's assessment of facility upkeep and replacement needs. The City Charter mandates that an annual appropriation be made equal to the sum of not less than 0.0325% of the assessed value of all City property for the financial support of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Nonetheless, even though the Department receives a minimum predetermined amount of funding from this source each year, it is inadequate to maintain all Park facilities and programs at desired levels. Although Griffith Park does generate specific on-site revenues from user fees, leases and concessions, such revenues are deposited into the Department's general fund for the benefit of the

entire Department. Unless and until there is adequate statistical data to determine the actual amounts necessary to preserve, restore and manage Griffith Park, it is not possible to determine how much shortfall there is between the funds generated from the Park and the actual costs of the Park.

In keeping with the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park, efforts to raise funds ~~in addition to what is available through the general fund~~ should be carefully and thoughtfully explored. Every effort should be made to make sure the fund raising is for activity consistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity rather than a situation in which funds are raised for activities that are inconsistent with the Urban Wilderness Identity simply because funds are available for a particular activity.

Restaurants, permanent research facilities, meeting and conference facilities, limited education lodging facilities, or new fee-based visitor facilities should only be added to the Park when consistent with, or necessary for, preservation of the natural Park environment. It is the intent of this Master-Vision Plan to keep existing open wilderness space open and the Park in a natural state. That intent must be honored and dictates against such things as corporate naming rights and similar activities.

Philanthropic institutions and individuals that are prepared to support the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park should be solicited for support consistent with a strategic fund-raising campaign. Grants from other public agencies for specific projects that enhance the Urban Wilderness of the Park should be identified and pursued as part of any fund-raising program.

VII. SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Management of Griffith Park ~~Needs to~~Should Be Undertaken by an Individual Responsible Only for Regional Parks, with Adequate Professional Support from a Variety of Disciplines
 - A. There should be an individual within a geographical division of the Department solely responsible for the management of Regional Parks.
 - B. A Park ecologist position is essential to the maintenance of the Griffith Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.
 - C. A single individual should be responsible for coordinating all events, whether public or private, within the Park.

- D. The Park Rangers Division, employed by the Department and based in Griffith Park, should remain fully staffed and funded and retain their status as Peace Officers.
 - E. Staff offices for all management-related operations should be located in one location at the Central Service Yard and the Yard should be redesigned for efficiency, future capacity and the possible public use of some portion of the area.
 - F. With the exception of the Park Manager, all maintenance staff, security and other Park staff, including rangers, should be dedicated solely to Griffith Park.
2. Park Maintenance Should Be Highly Systematized and Overseen
- A. A maintenance plan that is designed consistent with 'best practices' for parks should be immediately developed for Griffith Park.
 - B. A master gardener should be assigned to each of several specific Park areas and given the responsibility for ensuring that maintenance is conducted in a manner consistent with the Park's Maintenance Plan and the Park's Urban Wilderness Identity.
 - C. All projects within the Park that will result in habitat disruption and destruction should be reviewed by the gardener assigned to the impacted area, the general maintenance supervisor, the Park ecologist and the Park General Manager before being undertaken.
 - D. No project that will destroy native habitat should be undertaken unless provision is made for the restoration of that habitat.
3. Valid Statistical Information ~~Must~~ Should Be Obtained and Utilized
- A. The City should collect and maintain timely and accurate statistics and data related to Park usage on an annual basis to be used for Park strategic planning.

- B. The data should include information as to users, facilities, seasons of use, cost and impact on the environment of the Park.
- C. Periodic updated inventories of the Park's natural and man-made facilities and resources should be provided and should include:
 - Griffith Park expenses by category;
 - Griffith Park revenue and funding including shortfalls;
 - Usage levels, facilities, impacts;
 - User demographics; and
 - Wildlife and plant inventories.

4. A Citizens Park Advisory Board Must Be Immediately Put in Place and Until Such Time as It Is in Place, the Working Group Must Should Fulfill Those Functions

A. A Citizens Park Advisory Board must be established for the purpose of overseeing that the intent of the Master Vision Plan to preserve the Urban Wilderness Identity of the Park is followed and implemented in all decision-making regarding the use of Griffith Park resources.

B. The members of the Board are to be selected by Park Management with input from the three Neighborhood Councils that abut Griffith Park and The Los Feliz Improvement Association and The Oaks Homeowners Association and shall include at least twenty members an odd number of members, none of whom shall be selected by the Recreation and Parks Board of Commissioners, any City or State elected official, or RAP and shall include at least the following:

1. One member active in a senior citizens' organization;

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2. One member active in an organized golf association;
3. One member active in an organized conservation organization;
4. One member active in an organized group supporting arts within the Park;
5. One member active in an organized equestrian group;
6. One member active in an organized sports activity;
7. One member active in an organized outdoor recreational group;
8. One member active in an organized environmental preservation group;
9. One member active in wildlife preservation; and
10. One member representative of organized youth activities.

No individual serving on the [Citizens-Park](#) Advisory Board shall have any conflict of interest related to the management and operation of any lease, concession or any other aspect of resources in Griffith Park.

- C. The [Citizens-Park](#) Advisory Board shall meet at least eleven times a calendar year and will serve, at a minimum, the following functions:
1. Receiving information from the Department as to plans for using any and all of the Park's resources;
 2. Informing the public concerning the use of Park resources;
 3. Active reviewing and reporting on the expenditure of funds for Griffith Park;

4. Advising the public as to whether or not the [Master Vision Plan](#) is being implemented;
5. Ensuring that expenditures within Griffith Park, from whatever source, are consistent with the [Master Vision Plan](#);
6. Receiving and reviewing all information related to activities within Griffith Park, including leases, concessions, maintenance needs, activities, construction and advance planning activities;
7. Inspecting Griffith Park facilities and resources to ensure that the [Master Vision Plan](#) is being implemented; ~~and~~
8. Recommending use of Griffith Park resources that are consistent with the [Master Vision Plan](#);
9. [Advocates for Griffith Park within the larger community;](#)
10. [Fundraising activities to support the Vision Plan for Griffith Park; and](#)
11. [Educational campaigns to inform the public on Griffith Park's unique character.](#)

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- D. Until such time as the [Citizens Park](#) Advisory Board is functional, the currently existing Master Plan Working Group should stay in existence and carry out the functions assigned to the [Citizens Park](#) Advisory Board.

APPENDIX

1. Wildlife Management Plan for Griffith Park, Daniel S. Cooper, Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc., 2008
2. Griffith Park Plants and Trees, Anne Waisgerber, City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks, Undated
3. Griffith Park Recreation Master Plan: Surveys of Recreation Use Patterns: Fitness, Fellowship and Fun, California State University, Northridge, 2004
4. Park and Recreation Trends in California, California Outdoor Recreation Planning Program, California State Parks, 2005
5. Proposed Facilities at Headworks Spreading Grounds, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, 2008
6. Toyon Canyon Landfill Fact Sheet, City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Sanitation, Department of Public Works, 2008
7. Griffith Park Manmade Facilities and Attractions, Griffith Park Working Group, 2006
8. Count of Picnic Tables, Benches, and Water Fountains In Griffith Park, Griffith Park Working Group, January 9, 2006
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10. Existing Facilities Proposed For Demolition In Melendrez Draft Master Plan, 2004
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13. Existing Parking Facilities, Department of Recreation and Parks, 2005

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17. Rim of the Valley Trail and Corridor Map and Legislative History, County of Los Angeles, Current
18. Section 13, Public Recreation Plan, Element of City of Los Angeles General Plan
19. Comparison Chart of Features and Facilities in the Los Angeles Regional Parks, Griffith Park Working Group, 2007
20. Los Angeles City Regional Park Advisory Committees, Department of Recreation and Parks, Current
21. Description of Parks, Rivers and Open Space Committee
22. Relevant Maps for Griffith Park, Cartifact
 - a. Detailed View
 - b. Boundary
 - c. Watershed
 - d. Rivers and Lakes
 - e. Vegetation
 - f. Transportation
 - g. Trails and Paths

h. Constraints

23. Major Urban Parks Maintained As Urban Wilderness and Nature Preserves, Griffith Park Working Group, 2008
24. Membership and Affiliation of Members of Griffith Park Working Group, Griffith Park Working Group, Current
25. Natural History Survey
26. Listing of Water Tanks, Griffith Park Working Group, Current
27. Land Bridge Drawing, Griffith Park Working Group, Current
28. Example of Public Comments, June, 2008
29. Parks with designated purpose.

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