

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Department of Recreation and Parks

November 1, 2006

TO: BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS
FROM: JON KIRK MUKRI, General Manager 
SUBJECT: ELYSIAN PARK MASTER PLAN

In August 2003, a project charter (#1210B) was issued for a Master Plan for Elysian Park to update the adopted 1971 Elysian Park Master Plan. Funding was comprised of \$100,000 from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and \$50,000 in Municipal Recreation Program (MRP) funds. Requests for Proposals were sent to three firms: EPTDESIGN, Inc., (formerly know as EPT Landscape Architecture), Land Images, and Withers and Sandgren, Ltd. (W & S). Based on a review of their proposals, the firms of Land Images and W & S were interviewed. Based on the results of the interview process, W & S was selected to prepare the plan at a cost of \$134,945. The Notice to Proceed (NTP) was issued in October 2003.

The Department of Recreation and Parks required that W & S coordinate all Master Planning work with an Oversight Committee consisting of seven members with a range of experience in the areas of design, finance, planning or recreation and able to work harmoniously to achieve consensus recommendations. In February 2004, staff from Council Districts One and Thirteen, and Department staff solicited recommendations for oversight members from community organizations and selected the following committee members:

Citizens Committee to Save Elysian Park (CCSEP) - Scott Fajak, Sally Neubauer, and Pamela Burgess

Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council – Christine Peters

Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council – Alicia Brown

Elysian Valley Riverside Neighborhood Council – Steve Zimmer

At-Large community representative – Tien Ho, Los Angeles Dodgers

Glen Dake and Mitch O'Farrel from Council District Thirteen and Susan Wong, Mike Fong and Monica Aleman from Council District One represented their Council Offices at Oversight Committee meetings and community meetings. Landscape Architect Steve Davis, from the Bureau of Engineering Architectural Division and formerly of the Department of Recreation and Parks Planning and Development Group when the NTP was issued, served as the Master Plan

Project Manager and facilitated the Oversight Committee meetings and community meetings. Metro Region Superintendent Mark Mariscal, Senior Park Maintenance Supervisor Bill Lopez, and Park Maintenance Supervisor Peggy Kelly provided staff support to the Oversight Committee. The dedication of the Oversight Committee and the expertise of Maintenance and Operations staff proved invaluable to the master planning process. The work by W & S on the Master Plan formally began with the first Oversight Committee meeting on March 4, 2004, to clarify the scope of work and define the responsibilities of the committee members. The Oversight Committee attended ten formal meetings, three community meetings and commented by e-mail on numerous questions throughout a multi-year planning process.

W & S toured Elysian Park with the Oversight Committee members, interviewed Department staff, and conducted extensive research on existing planning documents and mapping in preparation for the first of three community meetings. The Department of Recreation and Parks' web page was used throughout the Master Plan process to post background documents including the 1971 Master Plan and all drafts of this Master Plan. Community meeting participants who provided their e-mail addresses were notified of subsequent meetings and advised to monitor progress of the Master Plan on the web page. A total of three community meetings were conducted at Grace E. Simons Lodge in Elysian Park.

First Community Meeting – June 23, 2004 (71 people signed the attendance sheet):

This meeting introduced the community to the master planning process and also offered workshops to assess community concerns and interests. City Staff, Council Office representatives, and the members of the Oversight Committee were introduced and participants were encouraged to remain involved by e-mail and by tracking the Master Plan on the Recreation and Parks web page. Self-addressed, mail-in comment cards were available for follow up remarks after the meeting, and participants were encouraged to take extra cards for interested neighbors who could not attend the meeting.

Workshops were conducted simultaneously on four topics: Fun and Recreation, Getting Around the Park, the Park Land, and Taking Care of the Park. Each workshop centered around three to four specific questions concerning the topic. The participants were divided into four groups and rotated through each topic. W & S recorded more than 450 comments from the workshops and later received an additional 26 comments from mailed comment cards. W & S used this information to develop preliminary recommendations for the second community meeting.

Second Community Meeting – November 18, 2004 (59 people signed the attendance sheet):

W & S presented preliminary recommendations for solving problems identified in the first community meeting and answered questions. A questionnaire was distributed with specific questions about the recommendations. The questionnaire also asked participants to rank priorities for the Master Plan from one to four. Forty fully completed questionnaires were returned along with three, first page returns and six mailed comment cards. The top five

rankings in descending order of priority were general maintenance, pedestrian and bike access along Stadium Way, habitat restoration, regional trails, and land acquisition.

W & S used the workshop information and questionnaire results, as well as their research and meetings with Department staff and the Oversight Committee, to develop a preliminary draft Master Plan. The preliminary draft was circulated to various stakeholders and Recreation and Parks staff for an extensive review. Comments were used to produce a draft for public review.

Third Community Meeting – September 22, 2005 (34 people signed the attendance sheet):

Prior to the community meeting, the draft was made available for review on the Department of Recreation and Parks web page. Draft Master Plan copies with meeting announcements were also placed in City Libraries and in the City Hall and Field Offices of Council Districts One and Thirteen. W & S presented the four chapters of the draft Master Plan with breaks for questions and comments between each chapter. Meeting participants were advised to take extra copies of the draft master plan and to encourage friends and neighbors to comment by e-mail or with the self-addressed comment cards that were provided at all community meetings. One hundred fifty printed copies were made available at the community meeting, and over 120 were taken.

W & S received 37 e-mails and 33 mailed comment cards from the public. Steve Davis received thirty-five e-mails from the public. Written comments and e-mails were also received from City staff and Council Offices One and Thirteen. W & S analyzed the comments and reviewed them with the Oversight Committee and Recreation and Parks staff. The goal for the Master Plan was to make recommendations where a strong consensus was achieved among community meeting participants and among the members of the Oversight Committee. Several topics defied a clear consensus. Typical among these topics included designating a dog park location and adding sports lighting at Bishop Canyon. The Master Plan describes the issues but does not make a recommendation for or against.

The final draft was completed in June 2006 and circulated to Recreation and Parks and the Oversight Committee. Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) must be accomplished before the Elysian Park Master Plan can be adopted by the Department of Recreation and Parks Board of Commissioners and the City Council. The Master Plan will remain in final draft form until the environmental review is completed.

A programmatic Environmental Impact Report will require from six to nine months to complete at a cost of approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000. The exact cost and time requirement will depend on the need for special studies. When funding is identified, an RFP can be prepared that will identify the appropriate scope of work and solicit a contractor.

Report prepared by Steve Davis, Landscape Architect I, Bureau of Engineering. Reviewed by Neil Drucker, Recreational and Cultural Facilities Program; and Bradley Smith, Chief Deputy City Engineer, Bureau of Engineering.