



### ***The Existing Condition of the Park***

- 1.** *The 8,200 SF auditorium is an outdated facility and currently under utilized. Its size, location and configuration are inadequate for all but a few functions. Its position at the southeast corner of the park is detrimental to the unification of open space within the park and blocks views of the green space from San Vicente Boulevard. With its back turned to the park and its ground floor elevated above the street by a half-story, the interior functions of the building are isolated from the life of both the park and the street.*
- 2.** *The south parking lot is inadequately sized for public meetings--attendees use the San Vicente street parking and the Melrose alley south of the tennis courts. Patrons of the commercial establishments on Robertson and Santa Monica Boulevards use this lot. It is conveniently located, but its asphalt surfaces dominate views of the park especially from the southern approach along San Vicente and from within the park itself looking south.*
- 3.** *The one-story, 5,000 SF county-owned library is of the same vintage as the auditorium and in a deteriorated physical condition. Low-slung, with its back to the ball field and basketball courts, its roof at eye-level from the upper areas of the park, shrouded in trees--the library, despite its prominent position, is barely visible and hence has little presence physically, functionally or symbolically within the park or the city as a whole. Its location and configuration are detrimental to the overall unity of the park.*
- 4.** *The north parking lot (40 spaces) forms the San Vicente frontage of the park from the library north. This lot serves mainly the library and ball field, but also patrons of the Santa Monica Boulevard commercial establishments. Together with the diagonal parking within the San Vicente right-of-way this parking forms the dominant visual impression of the park to passersby entering and exiting West Hollywood via San Vicente.*
- 5.** *The 25-yard swimming pool lies between the auditorium and library and is set within a concrete deck elevated approximately one-half story above San Vicente, separated from the street by a chain link fence and a strip of grass and trees. A half-story retaining wall running along the west side of the pool deck makes the transition to the heart of the park above and to the west. The pool deck is thus visible from the street, while the park is not. A one-story, roofless pool house serves the pool from its north side.*
- 6.** *The strip of grass running along the front of the pool facility is host to some of the most spectacular mature trees on the park site, but because of its proximity to the street, its narrow dimension and small size this area is not useful as an integral part of the park.*
- 7.** *Wedged between the pool house and the library a set of concrete steps, covered by a metal lattice canopy, makes the half-story transition from the San Vicente sidewalk (and front of the library) to the elevated western areas of the park. They also serve to make pedestrian linkage across the park from San Vicente Boulevard to Robertson Boulevard.*
- 8.** *The county-owned, city run, Ron Stone Clinic is a one-story brick building of roughly the same vintage as the auditorium, pool and library. A parking lot on its west side is contiguous with and accessed via the south parking lot. Its is lower than the elevation of the park at the north end. This property is not currently within the park boundary.*
- 9.** *West of the Ron Stone property two paved, fenced tennis courts form the southern boundary of the park. They are separated from the park by the south parking lot, and hence are not integral to life in the park. The Melrose alley runs along their south side.*
- 10.** *Further west is the county-owned, unused El Tovar Maintenance Yard with its one-story shed building and some dumping depots. This property is accessed via El Tovar Place from Robertson Boulevard.*
- 11.** *The El Tovar Place cul-de-sac and the Werle Building on its north flank are city-owned properties. The cul-de-sac affords pedestrian (but not vehicular) linkage between the southwest corner of the park and Robertson Boulevard.*
- 12.** *The "Robertson Grass" is relatively treeless and mainly used as a thoroughfare for patrons of the nightclubs, bars and restaurants. While linking the park to Robertson Boulevard, this area is not useful as an integral part of the park. The sand lot, originally intended as an exercise station is mostly not used.*
- 13.** *The ball field is heavily used for informal recreational play and its turf is visibly stressed by overuse and lack of "rest." Fenced in on all sides, with a tall protective screen along the alley on its north side, bleachers on the west side and a tall chain link backstop the ball field has the appearance of compliance with regulation standards, but its backfield is seriously undersized thus disqualifying its use for regulation play.*
- 14.** *The paved and fenced basketball courts are separated from the ball field by a chain link fence and a 3-0 or 4-0 high retaining wall. The one full court and two half-courts are populated with players throughout the day and evening hours.*
- 15.** *The Tiny Tot building and the public restrooms are both one-story buildings, inappropriately located and inadequate in size. Together with the canopied tot lot, these facilities effectively cutoff the central areas of the park from Robertson Boulevard.*
- 16.** *The south slope, the children's playground area and the picnic areas are the heart of the park. Plentiful grass and trees make this the most pleasant area of the park for informal, unprogrammed uses most typically associated with the American city park. This area is also host to many organized, family-oriented activities, although the south slope is considered too steep to support such programmed events.*



**The Existing Park.** Buildings, outdoor recreation facilities, fences and walls crowd the 6.6 acres of the park to the extent that realistically only 1 acre is left for what most would consider legitimate park open space.

### The Point of Departure: Components and Variables

An analysis of the existing park and a vision for a renewed one begins with an understanding of its setting, how it is currently used, the needs it serves and the degree of success with which those needs are served. This is as much a qualitative assessment as it is a quantitative assessment. The best place to start is with an inventory of the components and programs of the existing park and an in-depth assessment of the park's physical characteristics. Our purpose was to grasp to the maximum extent possible the "lay of the land" both literally and metaphorically in order to set the stage for a transparent and collaborative design process that would lead to a plan for the best park for everyone. This was accomplished through a combination of means:

- Visual reconnaissance.
- Extensive interaction with the park and its users.
- Interviews, meetings, focus groups and workshops with city council, the steering committee, stakeholders and interest groups and city staff.
- Visual documentation and analysis with the aid of drawings and diagrams.

### Park Master Plan Requirements.

An understanding of the requirements for a renewed park was achieved through the combination of review of previous needs assessments and documentation, interaction with the park's users, city council, the steering committee, stakeholders, interest groups and city staff in conjunction with an analysis of what is there now, the potential of the park to accommodate current and future needs and speculation on opportunities afforded by the park site and its context. The relationship between what was desired and what was possible was critical in making key decisions on the direction of the master plan and prioritizing short-term goals in fulfillment of the plan.

Critical factors beyond the park site's size and shape were:

- Economic feasibility--costs incurred in the implementation of components of the plan;
- Implementation feasibility--staging or phasing of components over time;
- The social, legal and political context that sets priorities and strategy.

### Park Master Plan Variables.

The variables that were to be considered in the planning of the park and that emerged over the course of the Reconnaissance and Analysis Phase included: A comprehensive assessment of the park boundaries and opportunities for park expansion such as some adjacent county-owned properties as well as city-owned and commercial properties; the extent, configuration and quality of unprogrammed open space---that is, grass and trees; the quantity and configuration of recreational fields and facilities for all ages; the relative locations of the key components such as the library, recreational fields and facilities, parking and open space; and, finally, the topography of the site.

### The Components of the Existing Park

- **The Library.** Currently housed in approximately 5,000 SF the library is admired for the quality of its staff, services and programs. The facility itself is out-dated and considered inadequate.
- **The Aquatics Facility.** This 25-yard facility was built in the early 60's as a seasonal facility. The pool is now open year-round, from early morning to late evening, seven days a week. It has out grown its original purpose and design.
- **The Auditorium.** At 8,200 SF with large auditorium space with a stage, a kitchen and some minor support spaces this building is considered inadequate for most recreational uses; it is the site of bi-weekly City Council and Planning Commission meetings.
- **Children's Playground, the Tiny Tot Building and the Tot Lot.** The children's playground is located in the heart of the park and features state-of-the-art playground equipment; the tot lot has equipment sized for very young children, and is shaded by a canvas canopy; The Tiny Tot building includes offices and a small multipurpose room.
- **The Ball Field.** Fenced in on all sides with a high screen at the outfield, with a set of bleachers on the east side, and a high backstop the ball field is undersized for regulation play. The turf is nevertheless worn due to heavy and constant use.
- **Basketball and Tennis Courts.** The basketball courts are just south of the ball field, paved and fenced; they include one full court and two half-courts. The two tennis courts located at the southernmost edge of the park are regulation size fenced and paved.
- **North and South Parking Lots.** The north lot serves the library and ball field with 41 spaces and is also used by patrons of the commercial establishments along Santa Monica Boulevard. The south lot serves the auditorium, tennis courts and the park with its 70 spaces.
- **The Robertson Grass.** This area's lack of trees and proximity to the street disqualify its use for children's play areas or many other park uses. The sand lot was intended for physical exercise, but is not used a lot. Patrons walk their dogs here, and there are dog-training classes held in this area.
- **The South Slope.** This grassy slope is part of the "heart of the park". Some of the most mature trees are located here; its steep slope prevents its use for outdoor programs or congregational uses.
- **Miscellaneous.** Public restrooms are located near the basketball courts and Tiny Tot building. Minor strips of landscape separate the auditorium, pool and library from San Vicente Boulevard and are host to some of the more spectacular trees on the site.

## The Components of the Master Plan

- **Open Space.** A major priority of the City has been the city-wide incorporation of green, un-programmed open space whose predominant characteristics would include grass, trees, promenades and paths for walking and jogging, as well as areas for socializing and relaxing. The master plan was to therefore maximize un-programmed open space as the key component of the park and as part of a larger landscape and open space plan for the surrounding area.
- **The Library.** A comprehensive program was developed in 2000 which describes a 30,000 SF replacement facility with reading rooms, community rooms, reference and research libraries and a small cafe. City Council directed that West Hollywood Park will be the site of the new library.
- **The Aquatics Facility.** The existing pool is heavily used and considered a critical asset of the city and this park. In the retention or replacement of the pool expansion of its size and amenities were to be considered such as an indoor pool and/or a 50-meter long course to support both competitive uses and recreational/educational programs.
- **Children's Playgrounds.** The two playground areas, the picnic area and the Tiny Tot building are critical components of the existing park and were to be retained, enhanced and/or replaced in the park master plan.
- **Recreation Fields and Courts.** The existing ball field, the basketball and tennis courts were to be retained or replaced in the master plan. Whether these facilities would be expanded in number and quality in the future--and if so, where, how and when--was a major consideration of the park master plan. Paved outdoor courts are an obstacle to the maximization of unobstructed open space; thus, their integration with other components such as structured parking as roof-top facilities were to be considered in the master plan.
- **Recreation Facilities.** The incorporation of a major indoor facility in the form of a multi-purpose family recreation center with auxiliary uses was expressed as a strong possibility in the master plan. This would be a family-oriented facility with a fitness/wellness center, dance and exercise studios, multi-purpose rooms etc.
- **Community Rooms.** The location of the auditorium like the library and pool was to be re-evaluated in the master plan. As the site of bi-weekly City Council and Planning Commission meetings as well as other programs and services the removal of the auditorium is necessarily part of a larger conversation about where these functions ought to occur in the City at-large, and if in this park, where and in what form.
- **Parking.** The expansion and consolidation of parking within or adjacent to the park is a high priority for the City. The master plan was to evaluate the feasibility of accommodating anywhere from 400-600 spaces for the park, adjacent and nearby commercial establishments and general public use in the area.

## The Variables of the Master Plan

- **Park Boundaries and Property Acquisition.** The master plan evaluated the feasibility of expansion opportunities, analyzing the costs and benefits of their appropriation and how they would be used to expand the park open space or as sites for facilities and/or to integrate the park better with its surroundings.
- **Quantity, Configuration and Quality of Open Space.** It is not just the quantity of open space that matters in a successful park, but its configuration and its overall quality and character. Lots of open space that is yet fragmented and scattered may not yield workable areas for outdoor functions of the park nor--more importantly--the perception of a substantial park environment. The park environment is given character through the composition of trees, grass and landscape, manipulation of the ground plane and the articulation of its surfaces.
- **Quantity, Size and Configuration of Recreation Facilities.** The degree to which replacement and/or expansion of recreation facilities and how much, how and when these are accomplished are issues which present a wide variety of options for the configuration of the park; and, they will greatly influence its extent, shape, function and character. Issues of demand, costs and benefits was weighed in the context of the intense need and desire for increased open space in the City and West Hollywood Park.
- **Locations of Major Components.** Buildings, courts and fields are related to and somewhat dependent on each other; their relative locations are to a degree dependent on these relationships and will greatly influence the configuration and character of the open space of the park. Parking, for example, must be provided in proximity to the library; the children's playgrounds should not be far from the park office and the tiny tot facility; and the aquatic complex may want to be integrated with a comprehensive recreational facility.
- **Quantity and Configuration of Paved and Unpaved Surfaces.** Storm water runoff, heat retention, and air quality in urban areas are important considerations in the planning of a park within a city such as West Hollywood. The selection of permeable paving surfaces, the maximization of landscaped and turf areas, the concentration of mature trees are all means by which parks are powerful players in the quality of the urban environment and the minimization of the City's impacts on the local and regional natural environment.
- **Topography.** The site of West Hollywood park slopes nearly forty feet from the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard at the northern end to the intersection of Melrose Avenue and San Vicente at the southern end. The park itself slopes 27 feet or two building stories from its north corner to the south corner along San Vicente. Opportunities to correct extreme slopes within the park and to vertically stack park components are an important variable in the master plan.

## Challenges.

In consultation with City Councilmembers, stakeholders and interest groups and City staff and with the guidances and recommendations of the Parks Master Plans Steering Committee the following were identified as the principal challenges facing the existing park and the plan for its renewal. This list was neither scientifically derived nor exhaustively conclusive; however it did represent to the best of our ability the consensus of the community. Clearly not every detail was addressed, nor could every detail be addressed in the master plan. These were, however, the global issues that more than any other considerations set the stage for the development of strategies for the park.

**1. Fragmented Open Space.** The three principal structures in the park--the auditorium, pool and library-- obscure the visibility of the park and prohibit the formation of coherent unified open space. The buildings separate the heart of the park from the landscaped areas along San Vicente and other areas of the park and thus not only reduce the area of open space but its contiguity as well. The intimacy of the heart of the park, however, is a valued trait and one to be acknowledged in strategies for the expansion and unification of open space. The articulation of open space through landscape design is a key strategy to pursue in order to preserve and or recapture the feeling and reality of the intimacy and control that is so valued in the existing park.

**2. Unsatisfactory Boundary Conditions.** Chain link fences, substandard alleys and the back sides of commercial buildings are visually inadequate, functionally unworkable, and unsafe at three of the four park boundaries. These conditions do little to contribute to the quality of the environment of the park; they work against the integration of the park into the daily life of the City; and they prohibit potentially positive, mutually reinforcing relationships between the commercial properties and the park.

**3. Weak Presentation at Park Frontages.** The notion of the park as an out-of-the-way refuge from the bustle of the streets is appealing for those who use the children's playground area (the heart of the park) and contributes to a sense of seclusion and intimacy there. But a fundamental role of the park is to provide visual relief within the urban fabric, a fragment of nature within which promenade and congregation take place as an integrated component of a city-wide parks, green space and urban forestry network. This park is removed from view and lacks visibility and identity as a shared civic amenity within the City and is therefore not integrated into the daily civic experience of West Hollywood.

**4. Little Linkage with Surrounding Fabric.** Physical connections to the surrounding neighborhoods are related to the park's visibility and its integration into the experience of the City. This park is remote from residential neighborhoods. It is surrounded on three sides by commercial properties and on the fourth by a seven lane traffic artery. Having recently completed the widening of the sidewalks and the establishment of allees of trees along Santa Monica Boulevard this street has been transformed into a principal east/west pedestrian promenade across the City; and yet it has virtually no visual nor physical relationship with the park. While conditions allow for connection with Robertson

Boulevard in two locations (El Tovar and the Robertson Grass) the park does not currently capitalize on those conditions, and the street is essentially outside of the experience of the park and vice-versa. The width and treatment of San Vicente prevents meaningful relationship with the open areas of the Pacific Design Center. The slope of the site prevents visual linkages from within the park to the larger geographic setting of the City and the Hollywood Hills.

**5. Topography.** The ball field is on a sloped plateau at the northern part of the park, separated from basketball courts and the rest of the park to the south by a 3-4 foot retaining wall. The library sits another half-story below the basketball courts such that the roof of the library and its mechanical equipment is visible from most areas of the upper half of the park. Further south, the pool sits on a deck which is elevated a half story from San Vicente, and depressed a half story from the heart of the park to the west. The net result is a series of plateaus that further fragment the coherency of the park. The south slope of the heart of the park opens the vista from the playground areas directly onto the south parking lot, the tennis courts, chain link fences, the alley and the back sides of the Melrose commercial properties. The slope of this grass area is considered by recreation staff too steep to allow for organized and/or congregational uses. And the auditorium in its current position is elevated a half-story from San Vicente further isolating this facility from the park and visibility of the park from the principal approach into West Hollywood along San Vicente.

**6. Inadequate Facilities.** The users of the library revere the staff and the quality of its services; and yet most users know that the one-story 5,000 SF facility built in the early 60's, isolated from the rest of the park, barely visible from the street is an inadequate facility to meet the needs of the City. The pool and pool house were built around the same time as a seasonal facility (summer only). While parts of the facility have been renovated and while its users generally find it satisfactory as a facility it barely accommodates the pressures of constant use and were it expanded could support many more programs and uses. The auditorium is host twice monthly to City Council and Planning Commission meetings, but beyond volleyball games and a few dancing and acting classes and miscellaneous other uses the auditorium is generally felt to be too small on the one hand (for indoor recreational activity) and too large on the other (community meeting and gathering space). It is, according to previous studies, seismically deficient and in need of structural mitigation, repair and upgrade as well as utility systems upgrade to meet current State of California Energy Codes (Title 24). The softball field is notoriously restricted in the depth of its outfield, so much so, that the city was forced to construct the high protection screen along the north edge of the park to prevent damage to the commercial buildings. The field is lined with chain link fences and bleachers and thus has the appearance of a regulation field, when in fact the city does not allow regulation play due to its non-compliant size and the slope of its outfield. The Tiny Tot building is an older building, in poor condition and smaller than its many programs require. It inadequately serves parents with young children--a growing constituency in the City and of this park.

## Opportunities

In consultation with City Councilmembers, stakeholders and interest groups and City staff and with the guidance and recommendations of the Parks Master Plans Steering Committee the following were identified as the principal opportunities enjoyed by the existing park and upon which the plan for its renewal would be founded. This list was neither scientifically derived nor exhaustively conclusive; however it did represent to the best of our ability the consensus of the community. Clearly not every detail was addressed, nor could every detail be addressed in the master plan. These were, however, the global issues that more than any other considerations set the stage for the development of strategies for the park.

**1. Intimacy and Character of the Core Park Space.** The area of just over an acre at the heart of the park is grassy and generously populated with trees. Two playground areas, one for tots the other for young children are separated by an intimately scaled picnic area and together this ensemble works well for parents with young children. Many of the users of the park frequent the park often on a daily basis specifically to be here. Its size and configuration has proven, in use, to be ideally suited to the parents' ability to keep an eye on their children, while allowing them to enjoy the park and socialize with each other. This area of the park is either to be preserved and enhanced or serve as a model for the composition and articulation of an expanded park.

**2. Potential for Integration with Neighborhood Establishments.** The fact that the park is surrounded on three sides by adjacent commercial properties is in its current condition an apparent liability. Many American parks are separated from surrounding neighborhoods by streets. As such, the potential for the parks to relate with the life of the commercial fabric of the city is not often fulfilled as it is so often in, for example, the European model of the piazza or town square. This park is not surrounded by streets; the adjacency of the commercial properties presents opportunities therefore in the planning for the future of those properties and the park boundaries into an integrated relationship beneficial to both the viability of the commercial properties and the life of the park.

**3. Potential for Visual and Pedestrian Connections to Surrounding Areas.** The Robertson grass represents an unfilled opportunity for meaningful visual and pedestrian connection between the park and surrounding public areas. El Tovar Place at the southwest corner of the park is another untapped opportunity. Visual connection to Santa Monica Boulevard will be a high priority and perhaps provide impetus for the appropriation of one or more of the commercial properties along the north boundary of the park. The northwest corner (intersection of Robertson and Santa Monica Boulevards) and the northeast corner (intersection of San Vicente and Santa Monica Boulevards) are opportunities for affording view corridors and pedestrian linkages from the major east/west pedestrian and vehicular artery to the park. The incorporation, visually, of the plaza areas of the PDC into the conceptualization of the park will both expand the perceptual boundary of the park and afford real connection across San Vicente thus further integrating the park into the public life of the City.

**4. The Park's Location Within the City.** The setting of the park at the heart of the westside of the City in the midst of some of its most dynamic commercial areas and at the threshold of the City upon approach from the south along San Vicente from Beverly Hills and Los Angeles, puts the park in a potentially meaningful position with regard to both its physical and symbolic function as a central civic amenity. The master plan will capitalize on this opportunity by enhancing its role as a kind of threshold to the city, and as a centrally located community-oriented asset. Specifically, the creation of an inspiring and beautiful foreground in an overall composition that encompasses the setting of the City at the base of the Hollywood Hills and the hills themselves will be a subtle yet powerful underlying theme in the development of the park master plan.

**5. Topography.** The topographic condition of the park that aggravates its already fragmented state is itself an opportunity toward the goal of fulfilling the potential for the park's integration with the neighborhood, visual and pedestrian connections to surrounding areas and enhancement of its location with the City. The two-story drop from the north side to the south side could provide a way to provide recreational, community and parking facilities at the lower end of the site, while simultaneously leveling the park. This could accomplish several things including the creation of more flat areas in the park thus enhancing its ability to support a wider variety of uses, accentuating the role of the park as a plateau or viewing platform from which to behold views north of the City and the hills, and enhance visual and pedestrian connection to Santa Monica Boulevard. Sensitivity to and the desire to preserve many of the existing trees in the park is a necessary counterpoint in the contemplation of the costs and consequences of manipulating park topography.

**6. Creation of Building Sites Through Property Acquisition.** It is clear from the outset that the appropriation of the Ron Stone Clinic and El Tovar Maintenance Yard is a way to create an efficient, consolidated building site. In assembling these properties with the tennis courts and the south parking lot a long rectangular site with sufficient breadth is created of the dimension and proportion appropriate to many of the uses the park site needs to accommodate, such as parking, game courts and other facilities. The Werle Building site and El Tovar Place present opportunities for a building to mediate the park's relationship with the neighborhoods to the south and west; while the commercial property at the northwest corner is an opportunity to strengthen a visual and pedestrian relationship with Santa Monica Boulevard, through the placement of community facilities such as the library and meeting rooms. Property acquisition is our best tool for the accommodation of new facilities while minimizing intrusion onto the park and maximizing open space.

## Goals of the Master Plan

In consultation with City Councilmembers, stakeholders and interest groups, City staff and with the guidance and recommendations of the Parks Master Plans Steering Committee the following were identified as the principal goals that guided the development of a comprehensive master plan for West Hollywood Park. This list is neither scientifically derived nor exhaustive; however, it did represent the consensus of the community. Not every detail was addressed, nor could every detail be addressed in the master plan; but these were the goals that both “set our sights” for the master plan and became the guideposts by which we evaluate the success of the outcome.

### 1. Maximize and Unify Open Space.

Of the 6.6 acres currently occupied within the park boundaries, only approximately 2.9 acres, or less than half (45%) are devoted to green space with trees for passive recreational uses. Of those, about 0.91 acres are dedicated to the ball field, a fenced off area of the park that most would consider more a recreational facility than an integral part of the park. An additional 0.93 acres are miscellaneous landscaped areas. Because of their dispersed, fragmented nature they contribute little to useful passive park space. The 1.09 acres that are left are what most consider the heart of the park--the area of the two playground areas, the picnic tables and the south slope. This area will be the model for the primary goal of the master plan which is to significantly increase the amount of passive open space--grass and trees. Unity and quality are as important aspects of this goal as quantity; it is not merely the area of green space but its configuration and articulation which will create a successful park environment.

### 2. Create a Place of Relief and Tranquility.

A traditional role of the city park is to demarcate an area within the urban environment dedicated to rest and relaxation. This place is often seen as a microcosm of nature--grass and trees--in the American tradition. The community of West Hollywood has expressed a strong need for such a place of refuge and tranquility, accessible and yet removed from the bustle and vitality of the streets. The goal is to achieve enough expanse of true park area, and enough of a separation from the activity at its perimeter to ensure the ability to “lose oneself” among grass, trees and other features of the natural world. It will be important to consider more geographically and climactically appropriate plant life in the creation of an environment authentic to Southern California.

### 3. Create a Dynamic, Enriched Civic Space.

The community of West Hollywood has expressed another aspiration for West Hollywood Park--that it become the focus of a variety of uses and services associated with the shared public life of the community. These include a new 30,000 SF library, recreational facilities such as an aquatic complex, game courts and an indoor multipurpose family

services, such as meeting rooms and offices for the delivery of social services etc. A consensus has developed that the park ought to be the place where these facilities and their related activities congregate. The rationale expressed has been that it is not so much that there are few alternate locations in the city that justifies this goal, but rather that it enriches the life of the park by attracting the full diversity of the community to one place within the city and enhances its role as a civic amenity within the life of the city.

### 4. Integrate Park with Daily Life of the City.

As a place of relief and tranquility on the one hand and an active, enriched civic place with a variety of uses on the other, the park will evolve into an attractive destination for the community. An equally important role of the park and a goal of this master plan is that it integrate with the daily experience of the immediate surrounding commercial areas (and more distant residential areas) as well as the city as a whole. Many in the community have expressed it as “*the park as a crossroads.*” Inherent in this vision is the integration of the park into the existing pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns and the consideration of the park as an extension of a larger open space and landscape network. Promenades through and around the park linked with the surrounding boulevards, particularly Santa Monica Boulevard, the placement of parking in a way that it enhances pedestrian circulation in and across the park and surrounding areas, and the fronting of commercial and community uses onto the park at its boundaries are examples of ways to achieve this goal.

### 5. Enhance Commercial and Residential Life in this Part of the City.

Examining opportunities at the park perimeter, understanding the dimension, configuration and location of surrounding public and private properties and their existing and potential relationship to the park are important aspects of understanding the park’s relationship to its setting and vice-versa. The park plan will create opportunities for the city to intensify, elaborate and refine its commercial and residential building stock in this area of the city, and further integrate the park into daily city life. The park master plan will seek to identify such opportunities for commercial and residential development around the park for pragmatic and economic as well as qualitative gains. The creation of the park itself will set the stage for more intelligent land-use development in the immediate area.

### 6. Create a Threshold to and Face of the City.

Given its location along a major point of entry from the south, San Vicente Boulevard, and within a dynamic area of the westside of the city that many consider the heart of West Hollywood, across the street from the Pacific Design Center, the park could potentially become a kind of threshold or vestibule to the city. Situated at the base of the hills that define the geographic setting of the city, the park could become a platform from which to behold the city’s setting. With attention to its presentation at its frontages the park will become a means to present a dignified public face that in time creates a meaningful shared identity for the community, as much symbolic as functional--the kind of physical presence worthy of a postcard, a way to remember, collectively, West Hollywood.



## Guiding Principles of the Master Plan

In consultation with City Councilmembers, stakeholders and interest groups, City staff and with the guidance and recommendations of the Parks Master Plans Steering Committee the following were identified as the planning principles that were to guide the development of a comprehensive master plan and the achievement of the commonly agreed upon goals for West Hollywood Park. This list was neither scientifically derived nor exhaustive; however, it did represent to the best of our ability the array of tools at our disposal given a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the park and in light of the goals for its future. Intended merely as a framework upon which to give structure to the process the principles were enumerated to create an environment of shared understanding throughout the development of the park master plan.

### 1. Consolidation, Vertical Integration and Phased Implementation.

The need to enhance, replace and/or expand community and recreational facilities while simultaneously achieving park expansion and unification requires the consolidation of facilities and buildings--probably at the park perimeter; and further that techniques of vertical integration be called upon in order to minimize the consumption of land area. The costs of stacking unlike functions will be weighed against the cost and availability of land for building sites and the priority of maximizing park open space. The ability to replace facilities while keeping existing ones functioning is an advantage of consolidation at the perimeter. Issues of implementation are critical in understanding how best to plan for the replacement and possible expansion of facilities over time while maintaining a sense of completion within the park along the way.

### 2. Perceptual Expansion.

Given our ability to control the configuration and character of the park perimeter, and given some of the advantages of the location--the generous width of the existing San Vicente right-of-way, the existing (and soon to be renovated) PDC plaza across San Vicente, and the topography, techniques will be employed to not only expand real park open space but to enhance the perception of expanded open space. Narrowing of the San Vicente right-of-way will unify the PDC plaza with an expanded park; raising the lower areas of the park ground surface to approach the elevation of the north areas will not only create more useful (flat) and programmable park areas, but will dramatically improve the position of the park vis-a-vis Santa Monica Boulevard and the Hollywood Hills. The possibility of appropriating the property at San Vicente and Santa Monica could provide opportunities to open the vista to and from the boulevard.

### 3. Double-Front.

The fact that the back sides of commercial properties, alleys, service docks and parking and chain link fences form three of the four park boundaries has been expressed as both a challenge and opportunity for the park. A long term strategy for the planning and zoning

of the properties along Santa Monica Boulevard, Robertson Boulevard and Melrose Avenue will contribute significantly to the achievement of at least three of the six goals for the park. For the properties along Santa Monica boulevard in particular, we will be examining dimensional and topographical qualities in order to understand how best to plan for their long term development into buildings with double-fronts and mixed uses, addressing both the boulevard and the park, thus integrating the park with the boulevard and commercial and residential life of the city and activating the park with community and commercial uses at its perimeter. How best to handle the west and south perimeters, with either landscape or buildings in order to mediate between the park and its edges will be of considerable importance in the development of a comprehensive park master plan.

### 4. Permeability.

The perceptual expansion of the park and its integration with the surrounding areas will depend on our ability to create porosity--both visual and real--at the park perimeter. Special attention will be given to the corners of the park. Opening up lines of site and paths of travel at the northwest and northeast corners toward Santa Monica Boulevard will enhance the immediacy of the relationship with this important crosstown artery and promenade. Similar techniques will be employed to articulate connection at the southwest corner of the park to Robertson and Melrose, and at the opposite corner across San Vicente. This permeability is critical in situating the park as part of a larger vehicular and pedestrian circulation pattern and the city's landscape and open space network.

### 5. Spatial Articulation and Hierarchy.

The "livability" and use of the park will be dependent on the plan's ability to create distinctions within the overall park environment. Groves, meadows, terraces and allees, dense areas and less dense areas, garden and seating areas, paved promenades, paths and swaths and fields will, in their composition and articulation, create opportunities for a variety of experiences appropriate to both a place of tranquility and refuge and a place full of life and recreational opportunity. How the pieces fit together, how the variety is achieved within an overall unity will determine the success of the park in achieving the full range of spatial experiences from the vast and grand to intimate and modest.

### 6. The Simplicity Criterion.

The balance of the inspired and the achievable is dependent on considerations of both what is possible and what is implementable. Our responsibility is to identify the simplest ways to reach the stated goals of the enterprise; to identify those sites most suitable to the economically efficient and timely construction of facilities; those techniques that achieve maximum results in unifying park open space while minimizing costs and detrimental effects on the existing inventory of trees and landscape; and those strategies that minimize impacts on the day-to-day functioning of the park as it transforms over time. These considerations among others will influence the scope, the character and the strategies behind the master plan to ensure both its flexibility and its orderly fulfillment over time.