



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 28, 2010

TO: The Balboa Park Committee
Agenda of February 4, 2010

FROM: Stacey LoMedico, Park and Recreation Director

SUBJECT: Balboa Park Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Project Additions

SUMMARY

Issue – Should the Balboa Park Committee endorse the addition of the following proposed projects to the 2010 City of San Diego Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and for future funding?

1. Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Improvements
2. Balboa Park Tram System Improvements and Parking Management
3. Balboa Park Annual Allocation Projects

Department Recommendation – Endorse the addition of the proposed projects listed above to the City of San Diego Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and for future funding.

Fiscal Impact – None with this action.

Environmental – The City of San Diego, as lead agency, will prepare CEQA documentation per State CEQA guidelines for these projects.

BACKGROUND

In his January 2010 State of the City Address, Mayor Jerry Sanders indentified the restoration of the Plaza de Panama as a signature project for the City to complete in advance of the centennial celebration of Balboa Park beginning in 2014. The project will give individuals, organizations and businesses throughout the City the opportunity to participate in the restoration of architectural and cultural symbols of the park that are everlastingly linked to the history,

character and image of the City. The Balboa Park 2015 Centennial Project will consist of three initiatives, including the restoration of Plaza de Panama and implementation of an improved park tram and parking management program. The second addition to the CIP will be an annual allocation to fund a variety of projects to further enhance the historical and cultural fabric of the park.

Plaza de Panama - The Plaza de Panama is located in the heart of Balboa Park at the intersection of El Prado and Pan American Road (also known as the Mall). During the 1915 and 1935 expositions, the Plaza de Panama served as a central gathering space within the park. Over time, vehicular use of the plaza has incrementally expanded, altering the aesthetics, function and historic significance of the space.

The 1989 Balboa Park Master Plan and the 1992 Central Mesa Precise Plan identify proposed improvements to the Plaza de Panama. The central theme of the proposed improvements is a reduction of vehicle traffic and parking impacts on pedestrian use of the plaza. The Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Improvements project will implement recommendations made within the adopted Master Plan and Precise Plan. The total estimated project cost will be approximately \$5-6 million.

Park Tram System Improvements - The Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan address the need for an intra-park tram system for park patrons, staff and volunteers. The existing park tram system has served the park well over the decades; however, improvements are needed to address increasing park demands and recent changes in venue operations. An improved tram system is also required to effectively implement parking management and optimize available parking. Recommendations of the Master Plan, Precise Plan and recent land use and parking studies, including the 2004 Balboa Park Land Use, Circulation and Parking Study prepared by Jones & Jones and Civitas, Inc. and the Parking Management Action Plan prepared by The Tilghman Group and Civitas, Inc., will provide the basis of tram system improvements. Improvements will include tram stops, signage and pedestrian pathways to improve walkability of the Central Mesa. The total estimated project cost will be approximately \$3-4 million, including the purchase of new tram vehicles.

Annual Allocation Projects - The intent of these projects is to restore and reconstruct historic features that have been lost throughout the park over the past 100 years. Examples of lost features include building ornamentation, arbors, bridges and landscape features. Individual projects would be identified and executed as funding becomes available. Attached are examples of such projects. The estimated cost of the various example projects is between \$100,000 and \$2 million. The addition of individual projects under the Annual Allocation umbrella will be presented to the Balboa Park Committee for endorsement.

DISCUSSION

The Balboa Park Committee is established by the City's Municipal Code to advise the Mayor, City Council and Park and Recreation Board on policy issues relating to the acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of Balboa Park. Support of the Balboa Park

Committee is requested for the addition of the identified projects to the CIP as they relate to development and operation of Balboa Park.

The addition of the proposed projects to the City's Capital Improvements Program will allow the Department to begin to identify, organize and coordinate Balboa Park projects in the current fiscal year and to seek private and public financing to support the projects.

With endorsement of the Balboa Park Committee, staff will prepare a Request for Council Action to add the projects described herein to the 2010 CIP. At that time funding must be identified to retain a consultant to prepare plans, specifications and estimates for the Plaza de Panama restoration, tram system and related improvements. Funding in the amount of approximately \$670,000 will be required to complete plans, specifications and estimates for the Plaza de Panama and approximately \$300,000 will be required to complete the plans, specifications and estimates for the tram system.

Community input on these projects will be essential for implementation. All projects will be implemented according to Council Policy 600-33, *Community Notification and Input for City-wide Park Development Projects*, as a minimum. Additional workshops with the Balboa Park Committee, Historical Resources Board's Design Assistance Subcommittee, Design Review Committee and Park and Recreation Board are anticipated. Additional outreach to key stakeholders will also be conducted throughout this process.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Endorse addition of the proposed projects to the Capital Improvement Program with modification.
2. Do not endorse addition of the proposed projects to the Capital Improvement Program.

Sincerely,

Stacey LoMedico
Park and Recreation Director

SLM/cd

Attachments: Project Descriptions

cc: Council District 3

BALBOA PARK CENTENNIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

JANUARY 28, 2010

PLAZA DE PANAMA RECLAMATION PROJECT

Project Description

The Plaza de Panama, located between the Museum of Art, Timken Museum, the House of Charm and the House of Hospitality, was considered the “living room” of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. It has since been taken over by automobiles for parking and circulation. The Central Mesa Precise Plan recommends returning the Plaza to a primarily pedestrian space while allowing for minimal vehicular circulation, but no parking. The Plaza de Panama currently has approximately 34 time-limited parking spaces and 21 accessible parking spaces; these spaces would need to be relocated to surrounding parking lots or eliminated entirely. Plaza improvements include enhanced paving, decorative traffic bollards, site furniture (benches, tables and chairs) and landscaping. All asphalt paving would be removed and replaced with enhanced paving. The existing concrete paving at the perimeter of the plaza is in poor condition and should be replaced as well. Parking loss is minimal, and could be mitigated to other locations in the Park. This project is consistent with the adopted policy documents and has strong community support.

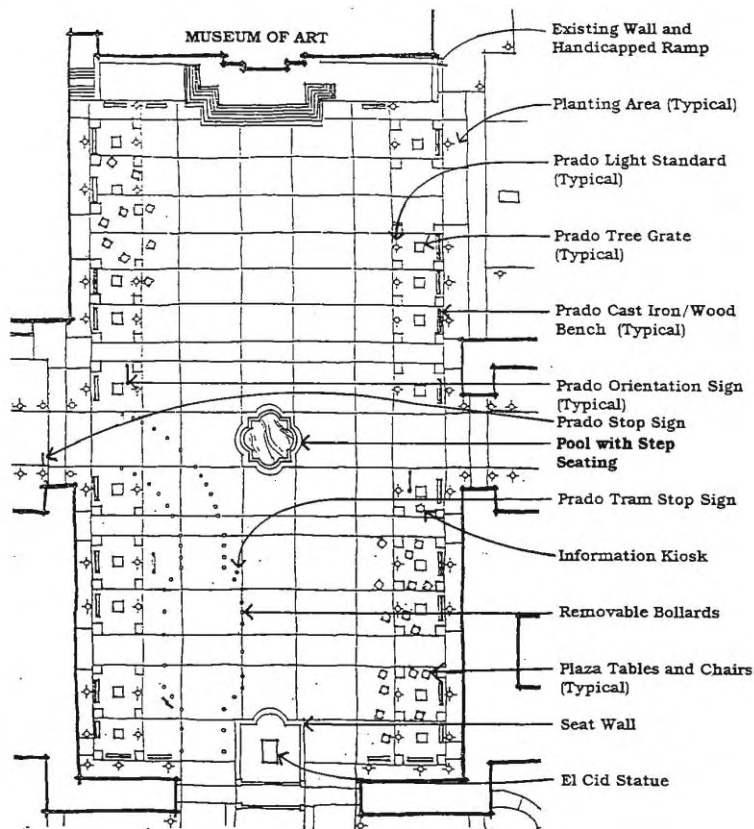


Figure 1 - Plaza de Panama Plan

Process

Reclamation of the Plaza de Panama has strong community support. This project has been thoroughly vetted in preparation of the Balboa Park Master Plan (adopted in 1989) and the Central Mesa Precise Plan (adopted in 1992). The project was also strongly supported in preparation of the Land Use, Circulation and Parking Study, which resulted in initiation of plan amendments by the Planning Commission in November of 2004. The project is consistent with the Central Mesa Precise Plan, and provided no significant deviations occur, plan amendments will not be necessary. The following steps will need to occur to successfully complete this project. The following schedule is based on Park and Recreation Department staff experience; this schedule has not been reviewed by Engineering and Capital Projects.

Task

Identify funding and establish a CIP

Select a design consultant, negotiate and award contract

Prepare topographic information for the project area

Prepare a General Development Plan/Design Development Drawings:

- Balboa Park Committee (BPC)
 - HRB Design Assistance Subcommittee
 - Park & Recreation Board Design Review Committee
 - Park & Recreation Board
 - Historical Resources Board
 - Mayor’s Committee on Disability
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Public Project Assessment (to commence after BPC recommendation)

Preparation of construction documents, specifications and cost estimates:

- 60% submittal (internal review)
 - 100% submittal (city-wide review, DSD review)
 - Final submittal
-

Advertise and award construction contract

Construction

Open to Public (project close-out)

Estimated Cost

The preliminary estimated project cost is approximately \$5-6 million dollars.

PARK TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND PARKING MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Project Description

Balboa Park currently has tram service provided by Old Town Trolley Tours. The vehicles are old style red trolleys that run on natural gas. The trams are generally uncomfortable, provide little protection from inclement weather, are slow to load and unload passengers, do not accommodate strollers easily and most are not universally accessible. However, they do add charm to the experience of park visitors and are easily identifiable. The photograph below shows the Gold Gulch covered wagon, an earlier attempt at inter-park transportation.



Many of the institutions view the availability of parking as one of the primary issues affecting attendance. While the park has ample parking for most days, much of the parking is remotely located at Inspiration Point. Institutions in the Palisades area have parking located in close proximity, but it fills quickly on busy days. Institutions along El Prado, and particularly the West Prado area, have very little close-in

parking. Compounding the problem, employees that generally arrive before the institutions open at 9:30 or 10:00 AM fill what minimal parking is available. A parking management plan was prepared in 2006 which demonstrates that 450 parking spaces close to the institutions would be freed up for park visitors by requiring employees to park in the remote lots at Inspiration Point and the Federal Lot. An improved park transportation system would then shuttle employees to their workplaces in the park. These freed up parking spaces would service approximately 3,000 visitors, based on three passengers per vehicle with two turn-overs per parking space throughout the day.

Process

Parking management for the park has been recommended since the preparation of the Master Plan in 1989. A separate Parking Management Action Plan for Balboa Park was prepared in 2006 which outlines parking management and an improved park transportation system. This Plan was prepared in conjunction with the Balboa Park Committee and received considerable input from employees and institutions within the park. This project should confirm and refine the recommendations of the Parking Management Action Plan and provide specific recommendations, including construction drawings and cost estimates for capital improvements, tram vehicles, and park transportation system operations and management. Capital improvements may include signage, transit stops, lighting, security measures and/or roadway improvements. Input and guidance for a request for proposals for park transportation system

maintenance and operation should be included in the scope of work. The following steps will need to occur to successfully complete this project.

Task
Identify funding (operating budget)
Select design consultant, negotiate and award contract (Mayoral Action)
Work with staff and Balboa Park Committee to achieve the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Validate approach of Parking Management Action Plan (PMAP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verify data gathered in the PMAP (new survey of institutions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate alternatives (employee parking locations, tram routes, tram stops, signage, security)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendations on tram vehicles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommendations on tram schedules, number of vehicles
Historical Resources Board's Design Assistance Subcommittee
Public Project Assessment of physical improvements, if any
Park and Recreation Board's Design Review Committee
Park and Recreation Board
Preparation of construction documents, specifications and cost estimates for physical improvements, if any:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60% submittal (internal review)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% submittal (city-wide review, DSD review)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final submittal
Advertise & award construction contract for physical improvements, if any
Construction of physical improvements, if any
Input to City on RFP process for tram operations
RFP process for tram operations
Award tram operations contract
City purchase of tram vehicles
Project close-out

Estimated Cost

The preliminary estimated project cost is approximately \$3-4 million dollars, including the purchase of tram vehicles.

SUMMARY

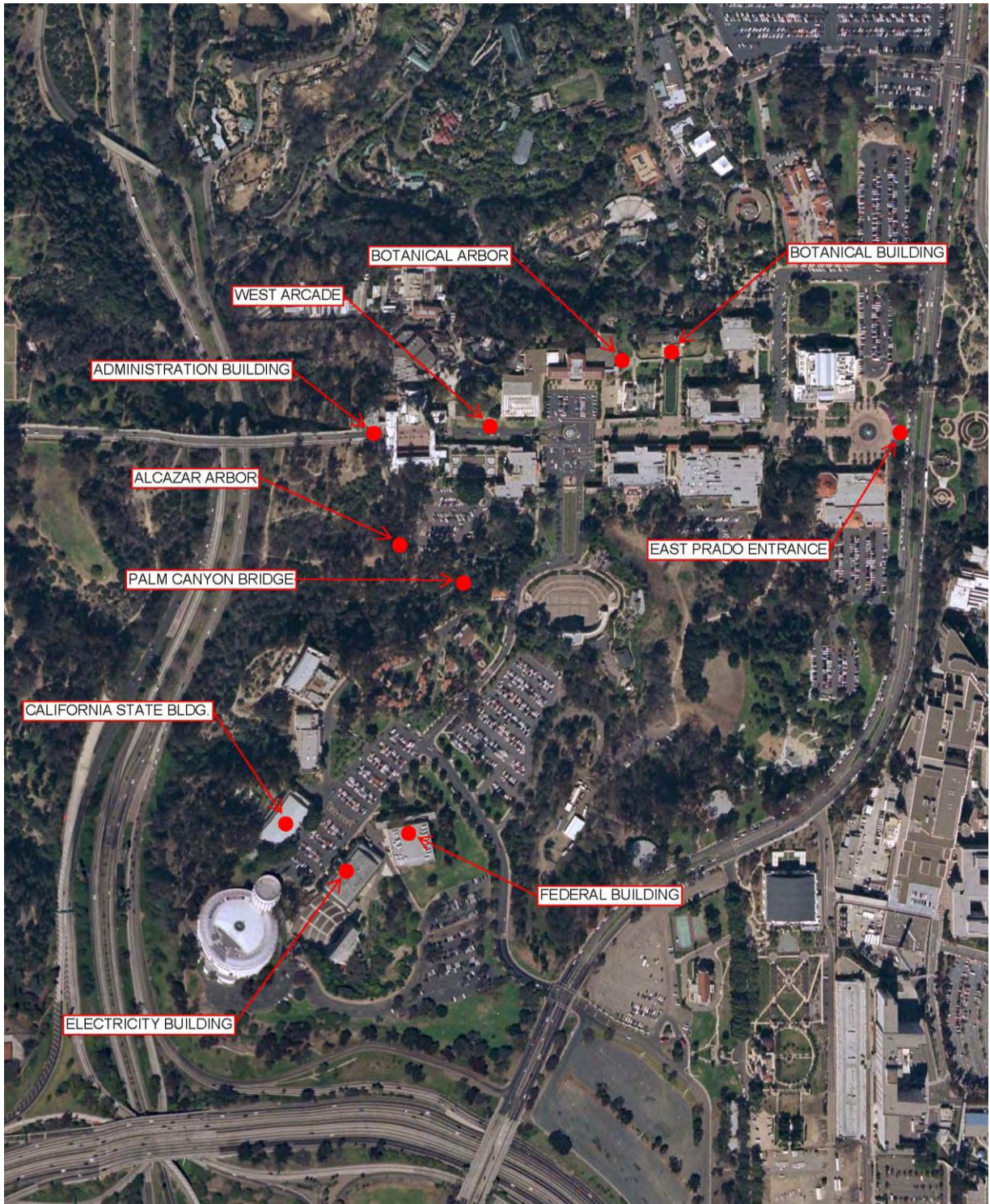
Each project described above will each require community input, design refinement and approval consistent with Council Policy 600-33. Review and recommendation of approval may include the following advisory bodies:

- Balboa Park Committee
- Park and Recreation Board's Design Review Committee
- Park and Recreation Board
- Historical Resources Board's Design Assistance Subcommittee
- Historical Resources Board
- Mayor's Committee on Disability

It is anticipated that the projects as defined will be consistent with the adopted policy documents. If these projects deviate substantially from the adopted policy documents, plan amendments may be required, and additional review and approval from the Planning Commission and City Council would be necessary. Additional permitting for these projects will likely be required through the Development Services Department.

BALBOA PARK ANNUAL ALLOCATION PROJECTS

JANUARY 28, 2010



PARK ADMINISTRATION BUILDING FRONTISPIECE – The original Park Administration Building was constructed in 1911 for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and is located immediately west of the Museum of Man along El Prado. The building was originally used for Park administration but is now the administration building for the Museum of Man. The building originally had an ornamental frontispiece that was removed in the 1950's. This proposed project would reconstruct the frontispiece from historic photographs and any other documentation available. The estimated cost is approximately \$1-1.5 million.



The photograph above shows the Park Administration Building in 1915 with the ornamentation and two flags on either side of the entrance. The photograph to the left shows the Park Administration Building as it is today; rather plain with no ornamentation or flags.

WEST ARCADE MOORISH ARCH

The West Arcade is located between the Plaza de Panama and the Museum of Man along the north side of El Prado. The arcade is a partial reconstruction of the Science and Education Building, originally constructed for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. The Science and Education Building was demolished in the 1960s and replaced with the Museum of Art west wing and library. This proposed project would reconstruct the Moorish arch from historic photographs and any other documentation available. Estimated cost is approximately \$1-1.5 million.



The photograph above shows the Moorish Arch at the southern entrance to the Science and Education Building as it was in 1915. The photograph to the left shows the plain façade as it exists today.

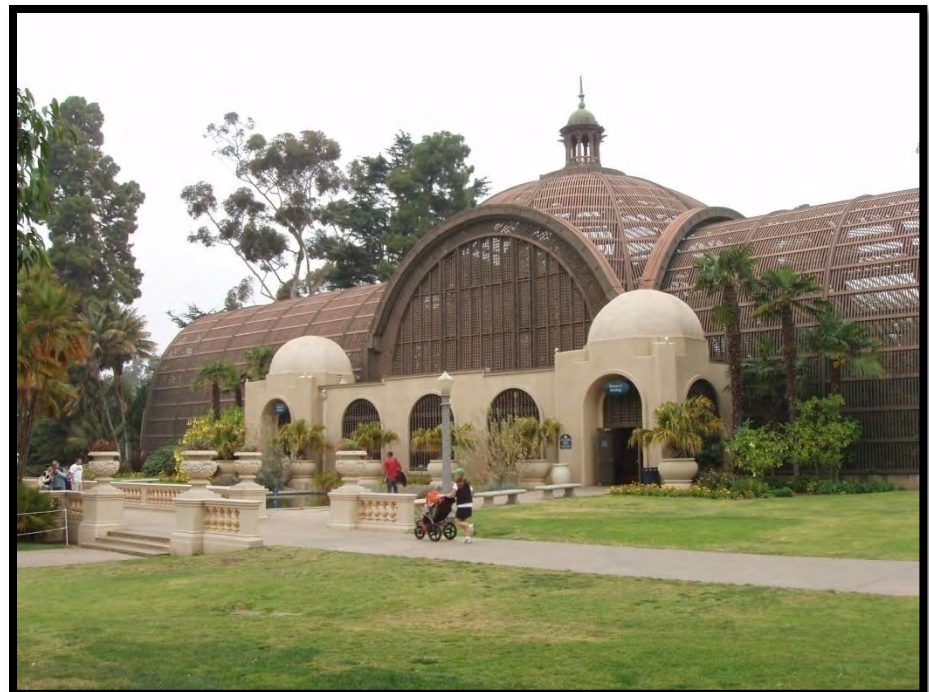


BOTANICAL BUILDING ARCADES

The Botanical Building is one of the few structures in Balboa Park that was intended to remain after the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. The lathe style building houses many rare plants, and hosts several special plant exhibits throughout the year. The building has been renovated in the past, and has lost several features. The north wing of the building has been completely removed and replaced by a parking lot. The

arcades along the south façade of the building have been removed, and the glass framed windows have been replaced with wood spindles. This project would reconstruct the arcades, replace the windows and restore missing details from historic photographs and available construction drawings. The estimated cost is approximately \$1million.

The photograph above shows the Botanical Building with the original arcades and detailed glass windows in the arches. The photograph below shows the Botanical Building as it exists today, without these elements. The photographs also indicate that details on the domes and arches have also been simplified.



AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM ORNAMENTATION – The Automotive Museum was originally constructed for the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. Originally named the California State Building, it was designed by Richard Requa in the Art Deco style. The building was originally adorned with ornamental friezes and cornices, with Grizzly Bears standing watch at the corners (see left side of photo below). The ornamentation was constructed of staff plaster, which has since deteriorated and been removed. This project would replace the missing ornamental friezes, cornices and grizzly bears from historic photographs and available construction drawings. The estimated cost is approximately \$1 million.



The photograph above shows the California State Building (now the Automotive Museum) as it was for the 1935 Exposition. This photograph shows the decorative cornices and friezes as well as one of the Grizzly Bears at the left edge of the building. The photographs below show the building as it exists today without the ornamentation.





MUNICIPAL GYM ORNAMENTATION

The Municipal Gym was originally constructed as the Palace of Electricity and Varied Industries for the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. The building was designed by Richard Requa in the Mayan/Deco style. The building originally had ornamental friezes and cornices in a similar manner to the Automotive Museum. It also had a large bas-relief panel of ornamentation above the main entry. This project would replace the

ornamental friezes, cornices and bas-relief panel from historic photographs and available construction drawings. Reconstruction of the ornamentation is identified in the Central Mesa Precise Plan. The estimated cost is approximately \$1-1.5 million.

The photograph above shows the Palace of Electricity and Varied Industries as it was constructed for the 1935 exposition. The photograph to the right shows the building as it is today without the ornamentation.

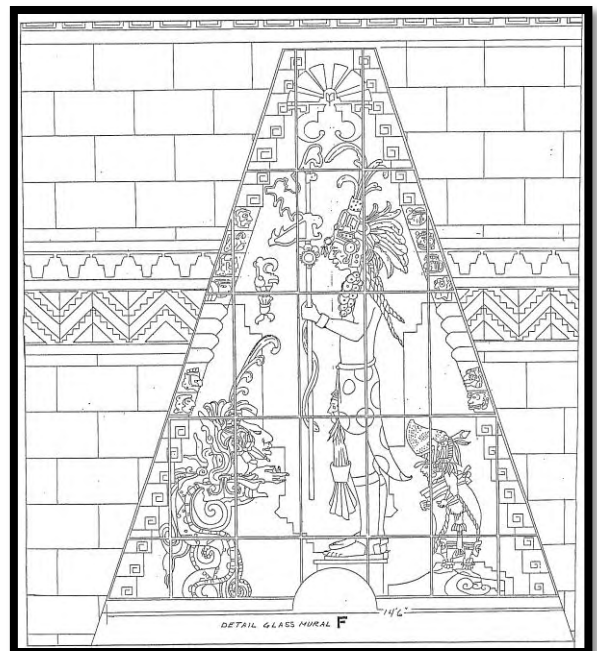


FEDERAL BUILDING ENTRANCE MURAL

The Federal Building was constructed in 1935 for the California Pacific International Exposition by the Federal government. The building was designed in the Mayan style by Architect Juan Larrinaga under the direction of Richard Requa. The main entrance to the building has a large triangular shaped window with dividers. During the exposition the glass had a mural painted on the inside. That mural was lost in the 1940's and has not been restored. The original glass and framing remain intact. This project would replace the mural based on historical photographs, construction drawings and descriptions. The mural would be either stained glass or painted. The estimated cost is approximately \$50,000 to \$100,000.



The photograph above shows the mural in the window above the entrance to the Federal Building as it was in 1935. The photograph to the left shows the plain glass window on the building today. The drawing below shows a detail of the mural as designed.





PALM CANYON BRIDGE

Palm Canyon is located south of the House of Charm, and is lushly planted with many varieties of palm trees. In 1935 a bridge spanned the canyon, connecting the International Cottages area with the Alcazar Garden. The bridge was constructed of heavy log

timbers with a planked deck. The bridge has been removed but the abutments remain on either side of the canyon. This project would reconstruct the bridge and provide an accessible path of travel to either side. The estimated cost is approximately \$2 million.

The photograph above shows the Palm Canyon Bridge as it existed in 1935. The bridge led to informal walking paths on either side of the canyon, including the trail that led to the arbor in the Alcazar Gardens (see page 7). The photograph to the left shows stairs and stone walls that led to one of the two remaining bridge abutments. The stone walls and stairs are not likely an original element.



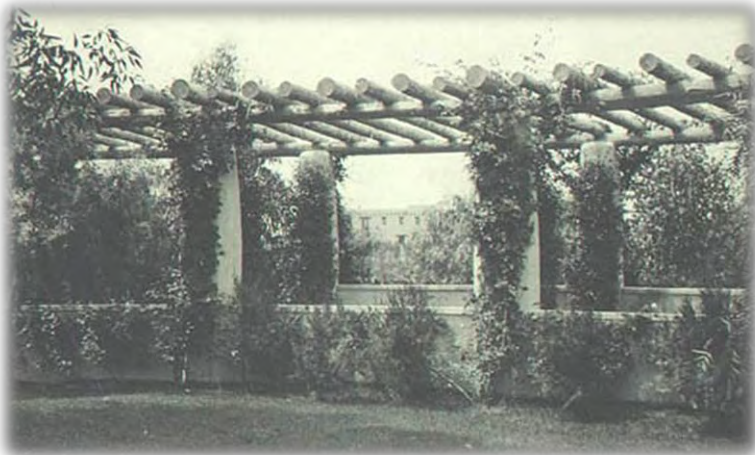
BOTANICAL BUILDING ARBOR – Many landscape elements from the 1915 and 1935 expositions have been lost over the years. These include arbors, pathways, planter urns, fountains and lights, to name a few. One arbor of note was located southwest of the Botanical Building. This arbor had a formal design and was the terminus for the east-west axis along with the fountains south of the Botanical Building. This project would reconstruct the arbor from historic photographs and available construction drawings. Reconstruction of the arbor is identified in the Central Mesa Precise Plan. The estimated cost would be approximately \$300,000.



The photograph above shows the Botanical Building arbor at the terminus of a strong axis in line with the west entrance to the Food Products Building (now the Casa del Prado) and the two

fountains flanking the Botanical Building. The photograph to the left shows where the arbor would be located today, providing relief from the plain and unattractive east façade of the Museum of Art East Wing.





ALCAZAR GARDEN ARBOR

Another landscape element lost from the 1915 Panama-California Exposition is the Montezuma Gardens arbor (now called Alcazar Garden). This arbor had a semi-circular configuration, and was constructed with low walls, plaster columns and a log timber roof. The Alcazar Garden arbor provided panoramic views of Palm Canyon and Cabrillo

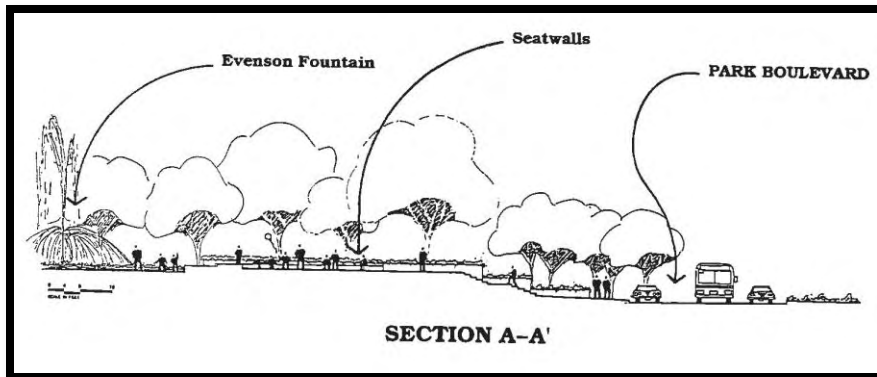
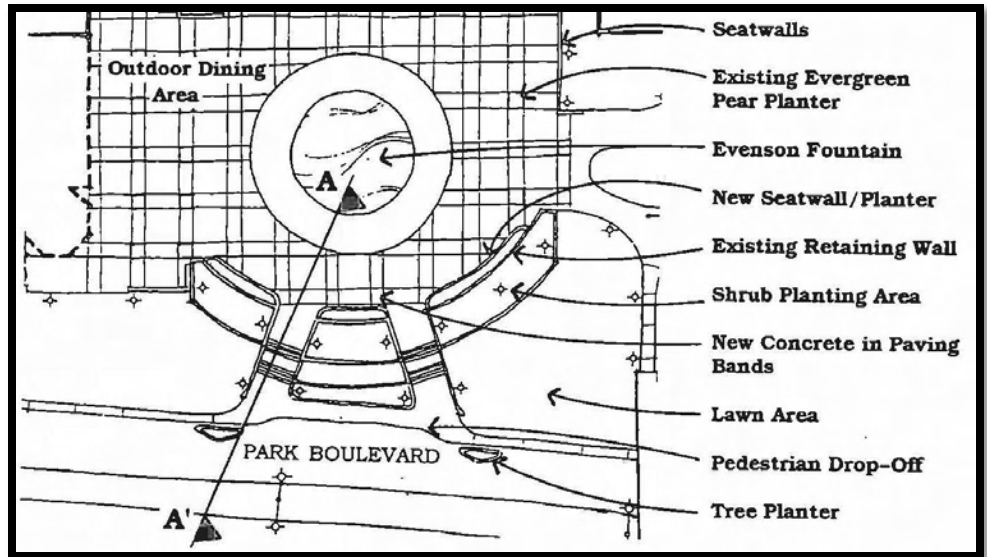
Canyon. Pathways leading to the arbor also connected to the Palm Canyon bridge in 1935. Together with the Palm Canyon bridge, a complete loop could be restored, connecting the Alcazar Garden to the International Cottages area and providing greater access to this part of the park. This project would reconstruct the arbor from historic photographs and available construction drawings. The estimated cost for the arbor and associated pathways would be approximately \$600,000.



The photograph to the left shows the approximate location of the arbor. The photograph below shows concrete footings that are believed to be remaining from the original arbor. Other footings may remain under the top surface of soil and leaf debris.



PLAZA DE BALBOA EAST ENTRANCE – While not a historical reconstruction, this element is a recommendation of the Central Mesa Precise Plan. The project would consist of a new staircase leading from the Plaza de Balboa to a new drop-off point on Park Boulevard. The new staircase would provide a formal entrance where the East Entrance to the expositions once was. The estimated cost for the staircase and associated planters and landscape is approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000.



The graphic above shows a portion of the Plaza de Balboa with improvements proposed in the Central Mesa Precise Plan. The graphic to the left shows a cross-section of the Plaza and Park Boulevard.

The photograph to the right shows where the east entrance to the Plaza de Balboa would be located. The site has a gentle slope with turf today.

