



• BALBOA PARK • CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN •

Executive Summary

Purpose of the Precise Plan

The purpose of the Central Mesa Precise Plan is to further define the goals and objectives of the Balboa Park Master Plan. The Precise Plan provides specific guidelines for Park policy development, Park administrative development, and Park design development. A signage program for the entire Park is also attached to Precise Plan as a separate document.



An overview of the Prado during the 1915 Exposition.

Precise Plan Study Area

The Central Mesa Precise Plan study area consists of approximately 193 acres which are situated in the heart of Balboa Park. Excluded from this study area are the San Diego Zoo and Roosevelt Junior High School. The Central Mesa planning area includes the Prado, Palisades, Spanish Village, Pepper Grove, Zoo parking lot, and War Memorial areas. The plan is designed to integrate with subsequent Precise Plans that will be developed for the Inspiration Point, East Mesa, and Sixth Avenue areas of the park. The project study area for the Signage Program includes all of Balboa Park.

Precise Plan Process

The Precise Plan process has emphasized the active participation of Park management, tenants, elected and appointed officials, community groups and the general public. A preliminary draft was distributed in September of 1990. Presentations of the plan were made, meetings were held, additional research was conducted and design review and comment were incorporated. A final draft was distributed in July, 1991. A series of presentations followed and review comments were incorporated prior to submitting the final Precise Plan to City Council for approval.

Precise Plan Context

The Central Mesa is the site of world expositions held in 1915 and 1935. The historic features which remain form the basis for its status as a National Historic Landmark. It is an urban park that is home to significant cultural groups, museums, galleries, theaters, and community events. It is a regional



park that has significance because of the unique character of its physical environment. The Central Mesa's historic, cultural and natural significance combine to create one of the world's great parks.

Precise Plan Summary

The Balboa Park Central Mesa Precise Plan focuses on the major goals of preserving both cultural uses and an open public park environment, creating a pedestrian oriented park with convenient accessibility, preserving historical significance while meeting functional needs and establishing administrative excellence as a prerequisite to design success. The following is a summary of each plan element.

Land Use

The goal of this plan element is to provide a wide variety of cultural activities within a public park environment. Recommendations include:

- Minimizing building expansions on the Central Mesa.
- Developing cultural links between the Park and Centre City and including off-site expansion of Central Mesa cultural facilities and activities in long range planning.
- Recovering open park land from areas used for roads, parking and restricted uses wherever possible. These areas include the archery range and the miniature train area.
- Creating multiple use outdoor plazas to accommodate cultural activities.
- Relieving peak hour densities by expanding cultural uses to underutilized areas of the Park and to non-peak hours.

Circulation

The circulation plan emphasizes creation of a pedestrian oriented park environment. Recommendations include:

- Maintaining public accessibility.
- Reducing pedestrian and automobile conflicts.
- Reducing the amount of vehicular traffic through the Central Mesa.
- Utilizing a park tram system to move visitors through the Central Mesa.
- Incorporating off-site parking and shuttle service on peak use days.
- Encouraging the use of public transit as a primary means of access to the Park.



Architecture and Landscape Improvements

The goal of this portion of the plan is to rehabilitate and modify the physical environment of the Central Mesa in a manner which preserves its historic significance and provides for future uses.

West Prado

- Rebuilding the House of Charm and the House of Hospitality.
- Locating a central visitor center in the House of Hospitality.
- Restoring the Plaza de Panama to a multiple use pedestrian plaza.
- Restoring the archery range area to unrestricted public use.

East Prado

- Expanding the Natural History Museum, and Reuben H. Fleet Space Theater and Science Center.
- Restoring an eastern pedestrian entry to the Prado with a stairway from the Plaza de Balboa to Park Boulevard.
- Restoring Village Place to a pedestrian promenade.

North Prado

- Reconfiguring and reconstructing Spanish Village buildings to restore the original character and usefulness of the complex.
- Creating a significant new walkway from the Zoo entry plaza to Spanish Village.
- Opening a portion of the Miniature Train area to the public for a picnic and children's play area.
- Creating a new service access route from Zoo Place to Old Globe Way.
- Constructing a new visitor center near the main entrance to Spanish Village.

War Memorial & Zoo Parking Lot

- Installing additional landscaping to the Zoo parking lot to comply with the City landscape ordinance.
- Constructing an improved south entry area for the War Memorial Building.

Pepper Grove

- Renovating the southern water tank building to accommodate Worldbeat Cultural Center.
- Creating a new multiple use plaza between Centro Cultural de la Raza and Worldbeat Center.



Palisades

- Constructing a 1,000-1,500 space parking structure that will be capped with a rooftop plaza.
- Returning the Palisades to a pedestrian area that includes plazas, lawns, and gardens.
- Constructing a visitor center to serve the Southern Central Mesa.
- Expanding the House of Pacific Relations.

Management

The goal of this section is to develop and fund effective management programs in areas such as:

- Park Activities - Management of public outdoor spaces and parkwide cultural activities.
- Visitor Relations - Development and oversight of a Park interpretive program, information centers, and general park publicity.
- Park Facilities - Coordination of tenant lease reviews and development of programs to assist organizations who lease facilities to meet their stated objectives.
- Personnel - Recruitment, training and development of a community volunteer corps and enhancement of employee training programs in Balboa Park policy and procedures.
- Park Security - Development and oversight of a park ranger program and security network.

Maintenance

Recommendations in this section of the plan include:

- Increasing the annual maintenance budget prior to physical improvements.
- Integrating maintenance programs into design contracts wherever possible.
- Assembling teams of maintenance personnel to perform specialized tasks.

