

A Vision for Scripps Park

Conceptual Plan (DRAFT)

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

The Ellen Browning Scripps Memorial Park is a 5.6-acre Park bounded by the Pacific Ocean on the north, to the east by La Jolla Cove, on the west by Shell Beach, and the village of La Jolla to the south. Gently sloping toward bluffs and beaches, the Park is a primarily open-space, landscaped environment heavily used by local residents and visitors from around the world. From its beginning in 1887, the Park has been the centerpiece of the La Jolla community, undergoing, along the way, changes and transformations. But its significance extends further. The spectacular dynamic shoreline, including world-famous La Jolla Cove, and its offshore waters, are a recreational, environmental and ecological resource of worldwide importance.

Located within a major urban center, the Park is increasingly subject to the impact of heavy use and concerns for its continuing preservation and enhancement have grown in recent years. In 1989, a Preliminary Coastal Plan was adopted by the La Jolla Town Council and another community planning group, the Community Planning Association. Although this Plan made specific recommendations pertinent to the coastline around the Park, it concluded that the Park itself merited more detailed analysis and planning within the framework of “a clear visionary master plan.” However, no action was taken until 2001 when the Scripps Park Project (SPP), a group of interested local citizens, adopted as its mission, “developing and implementing a long-term comprehensive long-term plan to preserve,

restore, and enhance Ellen Browning Scripps Memorial Park.”

Scripps Park Project conducted significant research related to the Park’s history, development and usage. The findings of this research are the content of Scripps Park Then and Now – A Cultural Landscape and Usage Patterns Report. It has served as a foundation for planning and public processes as well as the Conceptual Plan itself.

Following a fund-raising effort that drew individual and group donations as well as grant support, a public workshop was held on November 18-19, 2005. Approximately seventy persons heard presentations, toured the Park, completed questionnaires, and engaged in table discussions culminating in the expression of their concerns about the Park and ideas about its future. From this process, seven Guiding Principles were developed and adopted as representing a consensus of the workshop participants. The Park planning consulting firm, Campbell & Campbell, then provided a report containing recommendations for the Park that, in their view, best addressed the values expressed by the Guiding Principles. This report was subject to several public meetings and a great deal of local media coverage and attention. Responses to the report were then considered and some revisions were made. The most significant of these was the recommendation by the consultant to move the Bridge Club in order to improve views. In light of many negative responses SPP decided against pursuing this proposal. The following Conceptual Plan is put forth as the result of these processes and outlines important steps that should be taken to provide continuing stewardship of the Park into the future.

Toward a New Vision

The success of the Conceptual Plan depends on three fundamental concepts developed and articulated in this community process. The first is of overarching importance: appreciation of the Park's unique nature as a living system. From this, stem the two others, the necessity of an officially sanctioned community design and dedicating to Scripps Park all net revenues generated within it.

The accompanying Conceptual Plan provides significant opportunities to maintain and enhance the integrity and vitality of the historic Park and reinforce its connections with the ocean and La Jolla Village.

Park structures should enhance the spectacular natural setting and engage and invigorate but not dominate the historic space. The present sweeping lawn, existing arcing pathways, and small picnic areas provide a public space that is rich in edges, linkages and small gathering places, yet is coherent as a whole. Native bluff top plant communities should be restored and expanded, and sustainable design and

stewardship should be a universal and ongoing commitment.

The presence of the Park and its off shore waters are integral to the well being of the community. Its landscape serves not merely as an aesthetic presentation, but it expresses the "signatures" of dynamic processes, manifesting connection and commitment to the natural world, community, stewardship and re-generation.

The landscape and architecture of Scripps Park should be a visible demonstration of advanced sustainable designs and construction such as solar water heating and lighting. The design should explicitly showcase cutting-edge technologies that engage and explore new relationships with the environment, and promote sustainable, responsible public trust.

The safe and welcoming open character of the Park should be enhanced. Barrier free access should be enhanced. Improvements should be flexibly designed to provide a safe and secure daytime and evening setting for a wide array of informal and organized activities.

This Conceptual Plan is founded on the integration of many elements into a new vision for Scripps Park.

Guiding Principles Specific Implementation Strategies

The Guiding principles outlined below represent the results of the Consultant's analysis of materials produced by the November 18-19, 2005 workshop participants as reflected in their individual workbook comments. The workshop participants experienced the Park as both an evening and daytime environment. Opportunities and constraints maps contained in the Public Workshop Workbooks permitted participants to submit individual diagrams as well as written comments. In addition, they prepared consensus plan drawings and comments in small groups. This information was analyzed by the Consultant as was subsequent community dialogue and input from Scripps Park Project.

The Guiding Principles and implementation recommendations follow:

1 Preserve, protect, enhance and re-establish the invaluable natural landscapes and native ecologies of the Park and its coastline including the bluffs, caves, tide pools, beaches and adjacent La Jolla Ecological Reserve.

Discussion: This principle reflects a strong consensus of observations and concerns on the part of workshop participants and other community members that storm and irrigation water runoff and the presence of bluff-top exotic ice plant and rodent populations is leading to erosion of the bluffs, water pollution and consequent degradation of the quality of the bluff, beach and ocean environment and is a health hazard to users of the Park's beaches and off-shore waters.

Implementation:

1. Reconfigure and renovate the Scripps Park storm water drainage system to bring it into compliance with the California Ocean Plan in order to reduce both erosion and pollution.
2. Reconfigure the Park's grading and drainage patterns and irrigation system to minimize storm and irrigation water discharge onto the bluffs and into the ocean.
3. Control rodent population in the Park to reduce erosion and other damage.
4. Replace existing, exotic ice plant and other non-native plant species along the Park's bluff perimeter with appropriate, deep-rooted, indigenous plant species to reduce erosion and provide native wildlife habitat.

2 Preserve and enhance views to, from and through the Park.

Discussion: This principle reflects a strong consensus of observations and concerns on the part of workshop participants and other community members that ad hoc placement of Park facilities and furnishings and vegetation management practices had over time resulted in degradation of the Park's visual connections with its spectacular ocean views.

~~Although there was general consensus related to the relocation of the bathhouse structure and other features, opinions expressed in the Workshop and subsequent community dialogue were divided with respect to the removal of the building housing the Bridge Club from its present location at the most prominent site of the Park. While the Consultant strongly recommends that this site be restored as open bluff top, and that the original portion of the structure be relocated away from the Point to the center of the Park below Girard, Scripps Park Project has determined that this proposal should not be pursued.~~

Implementation:

1. Redesign the Point La Jolla area to better capitalize on it as the Park's best and most prominent view by clearing the area of insignificant vegetation and unnecessary hardware and providing an off-sidewalk, ADA accessible viewing station.
2. Maintain the wide, open lawn that sweeps through the center of the Park northwesterly from around the Lincoln Memorial to the maintenance access way.
3. Replace the present bathhouse ~~moving it closer to Coast Boulevard~~ to enhance

views; design the structure to appropriately recall the small scale, coastal, historic La Jolla character, to withstand coastal conditions, **to improve function**, to be accessible and sustainable and to serve its heavy use.

4. Remove or, where necessary, replace the disparate collection of perimeter railings with a uniform system designed to enhance views - preferably a low seat wall similar to the existing one along the Point.
5. Remove or, where necessary, replace the existing chain link fencing and pipe safety barricades along the bluffs with less obtrusive barriers such as native California plants or low cable barriers.
6. Remove, prune or replace over-grown trees and shrubs which block views with appropriate, low growing species.
7. Concentrate all Park signage to two or three low monuments at the Park's primary access points.
8. Develop and implement a uniform signage system for the Park.

3 Preserve and enhance the historic landscape design features of the Park.

Discussion: This principle reflects a strong consensus of observations and concerns on the part of workshop participants and other community members that the Park's historic landscape design is presently degraded and requires appropriate restoration. Further, the Conceptual Plan recommends the preparation of a Landscape Master Plan that will guide the restoration and re-visioning of the Park's historic landscape design features.

Implementation:

1. Engage a certified arborist to determine the health of the Park’s historic, specimen trees to insure both their long-term health and public safety, and prepare maintenance recommendations.
2. Preserve and, if necessary, augment the rows of Mexican Fan Palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) along Coast Boulevard.
3. Replace dead, dying or diseased trees with appropriate species.
4. Restore and, if necessary, relocate the Park’s historic belvederes with historically appropriate, sustainable materials and methods.
5. Use building and plant materials and site furnishings that are both sustainable and appropriate to the small scale, coastal, historic La Jolla character of the Park.
6. Repair the structure of the Cove Cave in keeping with the original design intent.
7. Repair and maintain paths from the Park to the ocean, where appropriate.

4 Improve accessibility to and throughout the Park.

Discussion: This principle reflects a strong consensus of observations and concerns on the part of workshop participants and other community members that safe, universally accessible paths of travel be maintained and provided.

Implementation:

1. Reopen, re-designate and generally improve the existing historic pedestrian access ways between Prospect and Coast Boulevards. Add clear signage at the top and bottom, benches at the stair landings and step lighting where possible.
2. Add a turn around and loading space near the Cove end of the Park. Conduct a feasibility study to determine if diagonal Parking can be added along the village side of Coast Boulevard.
3. Improve views and pedestrian connections between La Jolla Village and the Park along Lower Girard Avenue. Widen the sidewalks along Lower Girard Avenue, add diagonal Parking along the southeast side of Lower Girard Avenue and reconfigure the intersection of Lower Girard Avenue and Coast Boulevard to improve pedestrian access to the Park.
4. Repair the damaged stairs from the Park to beaches in an appropriate and timely **manner**.
5. Repair potholes in walkways in an appropriate and timely **manner**.
6. Re-grade and maintain the decomposed granite surfaces and turf edges of the picnic areas and pathways to accommodate universal access for wheelchairs, strollers, including the provision of an off-sidewalk ADA accessible viewing area at Point La Jolla.
7. Add universal access companion-seating places next to existing benches and future bench locations **where appropriate**.
8. Redesign the new lifeguard tower emergency facilities to be accessible; ensuring that any proposal to make changes to the existing lifeguard tower and/or provide ADA access to the same

will be done in a way that fully preserves and protects the current use and space of the terrace and surrounding environs.

9. Remove existing pole light standards and add low, walkway lighting along the perimeter walks to improve nighttime access and safety.

10. Replace steep ramp to the belvedere above Shell Beach with stairs.

5 Initiate sustainable, smart design and on-going maintenance practices to enhance the Park.

Discussion: This principle reflects a strong consensus of observations and concerns on the part of workshop participants and other community members that immediate and long term sustainable design and maintenance practices be implemented for the Park.

Implementation:

1. Improve or replace existing irrigation systems to conserve water, prevent over-watering and on-going breakage and other maintenance problems.
2. Reconfigure the existing lawn between the bathhouse and the Cove to appropriately accommodate its heavy use.
3. As natural processes undermine existing perimeter walkways, relocate them back from the bluff edges.
4. Where possible, replace poured concrete paving with **vegetation or** permeable, durable paving such as stabilized decomposed granite or pavers set in sand.

5. Initiate a **trash** re-cycling program for the Park.

6. Add solar water heating for the bathhouse showers.

7. Use only sustainable materials and methods when repairing, renovating, restoring or replacing Park features and amenities including but not limited to walls, paving, railings, signage, site furniture, planting and every element of the Park's structures.

8. Use only non-polluting pest control and fertilizer products.

6 Ensure that all Park additions, renovations, repairs, event selection and scheduling, and maintenance practices reflect, contribute to and enhance the unique, inherent, natural coastal landscapes, ecologies and historic and cultural landscape of the Park.

Discussion: This principle reflects a strong consensus of observations and concerns on the part of workshop participants and other community members that a detailed Master Plan be developed and a unified oversight be established.

Implementation:

1. Establish a single, unified Park Review Board comprised of appointees by the La Jolla Town Council, the Community Planning Association, and Promote La Jolla with attention paid to participants' relevant expertise. The Board will serve in an advisory capacity to the Parks Department, taking action on the following:

- a. Review all design proposals involving the

- Park;
- b. Review and develop guidelines for organized events within the Park. Advise regarding proposed uses that that may not conform to the guidelines.
 - c. Oversee expenditures of a Park fund (see below) dedicated to accomplishing particular recommendations contained within an officially adopted long-term plan for the Park; and,
 - d. Establish priorities for those expenditures.
2. Develop a detailed, long-term, Park Conceptual Plan with specific design and maintenance guidelines to direct the implementation of the above.
 3. Develop specific, seaside and aesthetically appropriate, sustainable designs or product designations for site materials and furnishings including but not limited to paving materials, walls, railings, signage, recycling/trash receptacles, light fixtures, drinking fountains, benches, picnic tables, fire pits and barbeques, etc.
 4. Add a public art and memorials program to enhance the park.

generated within the Park, beyond the reasonable operational costs of the organizations involved and fees required by the City, be dedicated to accomplishing the particular recommendations contained within an officially adopted long-term Master Plan for the Park. Fees required by the City should be reviewed to ensure that they cover the mitigation of all impacts from any of these Park activities. Funds generated specifically for officially sanctioned fund raising events by recognized charitable organizations should be exempt after any mitigation costs are covered.

2. Identify and apply for specific governmental grants and funds set aside for specific projects mentioned above, such as California State Resources Agency grants for infrastructure planning and public access and park improvement grants from the State Coastal Conservancy.

7 Secure funding to implement the Conceptual Plan recommendations.

Discussion: This principle reflects a strong consensus of observations and concerns on the part of workshop participants and other community members that funding must be secured to implement both the necessary immediate maintenance and long-term improvements, and that a mechanism be established to dedicate funds generated in the Park to the Park.

Implementation:

1. Require that a portion of all funds