



• BALBOA PARK • CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN •

Introduction

Purpose of the Precise Plan

On July 25, 1989, the Balboa Park Master Plan was approved by the San Diego City Council. In October of the same year the City of San Diego engaged to prepare a Precise Plan for the Central Mesa of Balboa Park. The purpose of the Precise Plan is to further define the goals and objectives of the Master Plan and provide specific guidelines for their implementation.



The grand entrance to the Central Mesa-1915.

The goals of the Master Plan are stated as follows:

- Create within the Park a more pedestrian oriented environment. Reduce automobile and pedestrian conflicts. Minimize through traffic.
- Improve public access to the Park through an improved integrated circulation system, convenient drop-off points, better parking management, improved signage and increased security. The improved circulation system shall de-emphasize the automobile while increasing public access to the Park and Park facilities.
- Preserve, enhance and increase free and open parkland and establish a program of ongoing landscape design, maintenance and replacement.
- Restore or improve existing building and landscaped areas within the Park.
- Preserve and enhance the mix of cultural, and active and passive recreational uses within Balboa Park that serve national, regional, community and neighborhood populations.
- Preserve Balboa Park as an affordable park experience for all citizens of San Diego.

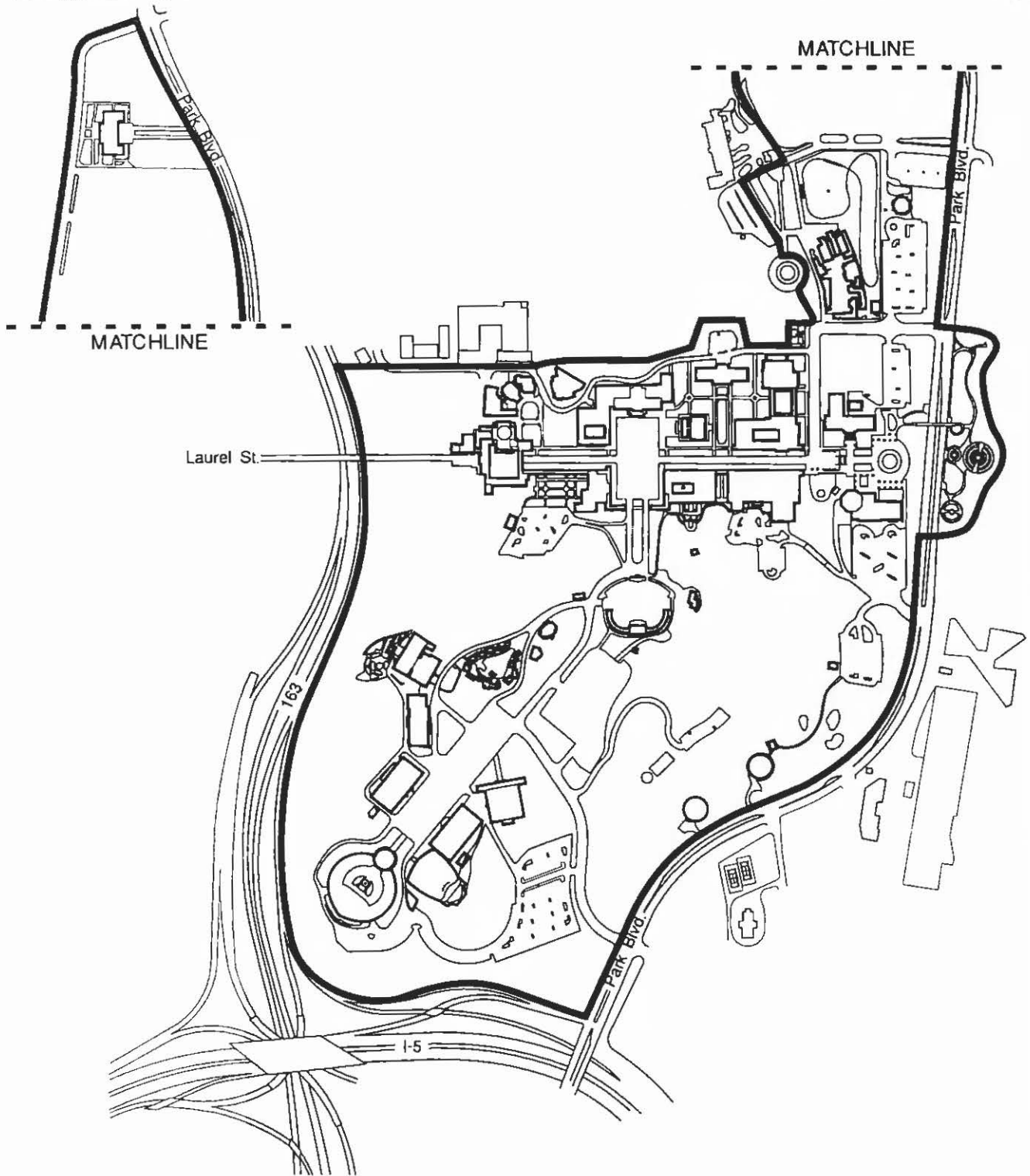
The Central Mesa Precise Plan will provide guidelines for:

- Policy Development - It outlines the program elements necessary to establish effective coordination of the many public and private agencies that determine policies that affect the Park.
- Administrative Development - The plan forms the basis for a commitment to fund improvements in Park management and maintenance prior to the construction of physical improvements so that those improvements can be effectively utilized.



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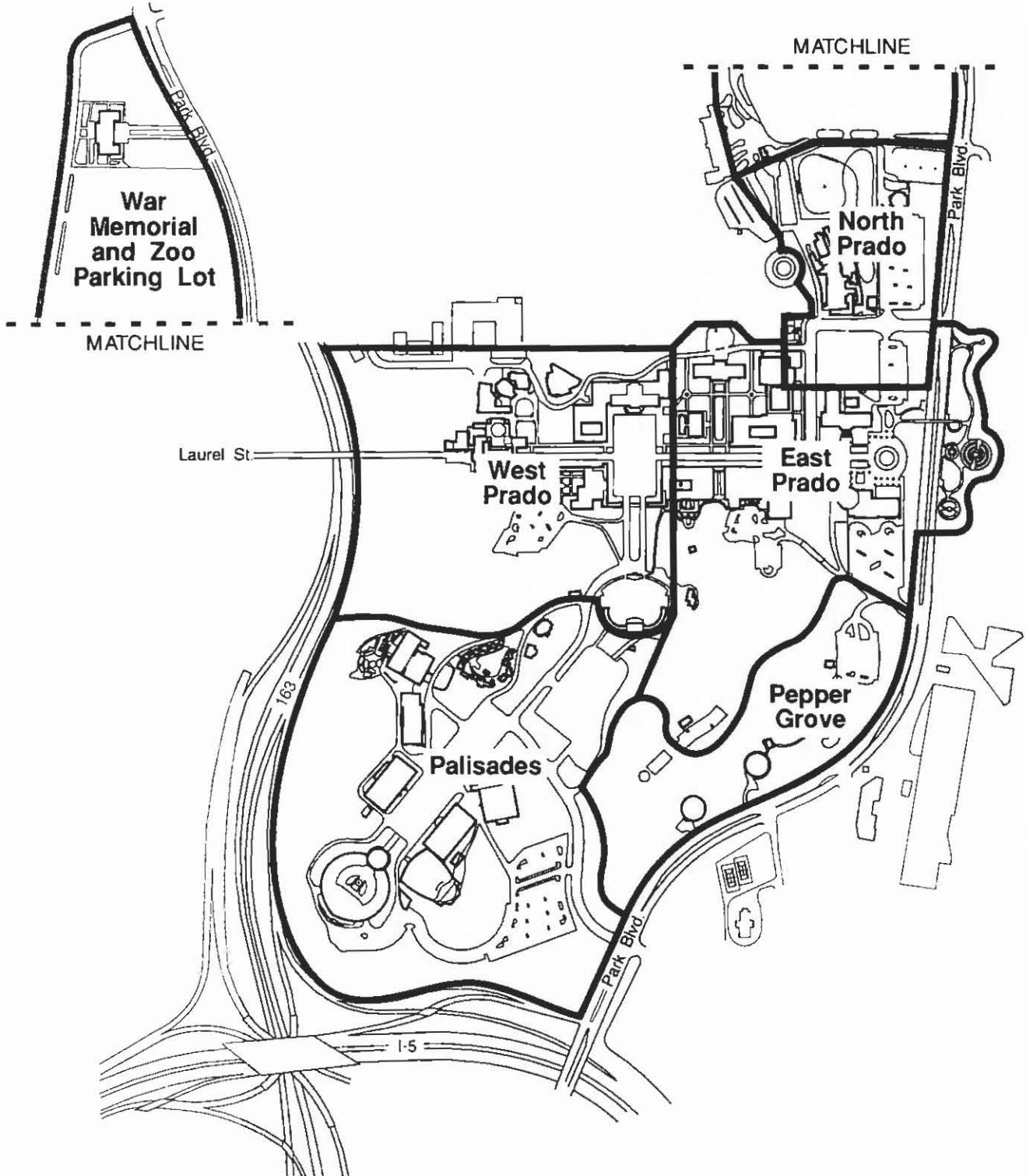
Central Mesa Study Area

13 June 1991

Figure
1







Central Mesa Subareas

13 June 1991

Figure
2







- Design Development - The guidelines and recommendations are presented at a level of detail sufficient to begin the construction document phase of design.

Overview of the Central Mesa

The Central Mesa is a 193 acre portion of Balboa Park that is perhaps the most familiar part of the Park to many visitors. The Central Mesa Precise Plan project study boundaries are Upas Street on the north, Park Boulevard on the east, Interstate 5 (I-5) on the south and the Cabrillo Freeway (State Highway 163) on the west. Excluded from this plan are the San Diego Zoo and Roosevelt Junior High School areas. The Central Mesa planning area includes the Prado, Palisades, Spanish Village, Pepper Grove, Zoo parking lot, and War Memorial areas. Figure 1 illustrates the Central Mesa study area, and Figure 2 illustrates the six Central Mesa sub areas: West Prado, East Prado, North Prado, Zoo Parking Lot and War Memorial, Pepper Grove and Palisades. The project study area for the Signage Program, being concurrently prepared, includes the entire Park.

The Central Mesa is historically significant as the site of two world expositions. It contains a fine assembly of Spanish Colonial architecture. The existing architecture and the significant remaining historic landscape features form the basis for its National Historic Landmark status.

The Central Mesa is a cultural center for the region. It is home to culturally significant community organizations, museums, galleries and theaters. Numerous special community events such as Christmas on the Prado, Earth Day and Kidz Arts take place on the Central Mesa, and major civic events such as parades also occur in this important area of the Park.

In addition, the Central Mesa possesses significance because of its natural character as a park in the midst of an urban setting. As a major component of Balboa Park, the Central Mesa greatly contributes to the City by providing a peaceful retreat from the congestion of a growing urban environment. The unique interaction of natural tranquillity mixed with cultural opportunity is the foundation upon which the significant features of the area are built. The park exhibits a skillful combination of architecture and landscape, it preserves priceless open space and it provides a wide variety of opportunities for the public enjoyment.

The Planning Process

The Precise Plan process has emphasized community participation, City departmental collaboration and public review. The first phase of Precise Plan development consisted of gathering information concerning existing site conditions and identifying site opportunities and constraints. A questionnaire was distributed to institutions and organizations in the Central Mesa to collect information regarding existing conditions of buildings, future facilities



needs, employee parking requirements, attendance figures, coordination of special event scheduling, and the feasibility of locating facilities or functions outside the Park.

Great emphasis was placed on consulting with Balboa Park staff and tenants. Many presentations and meetings were held with interested personnel and organizations. These included:

- Balboa Park management, maintenance, and horticulture staff.
- Central Balboa Park Association
- Spanish Village Association
- Mineral and Gem Society
- Southern California Association of Camera Clubs
- House of Pacific Relations Association
- United Nations Association
- Committee of 100

Many other agencies, community groups, organizations and individuals were involved in development of and review of the plan. These included:

- The National Park Service
- City Planning Department
- Citizens Coordinate for Century 3
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- American Institute of Architects
- City of San Diego Endowment Officer

Formal presentations of the Precise Plan, which included project review and comment, were conducted with major committees and boards. These were:

- Balboa Park Committee
- Facilities Committee
- Park & Recreation Board
- Public Facilities & Recreation Committee of City Council
- Planning Commission
- Historical Site Board
- Commission for Arts and Culture
- Art in Public Places Committee



During the preliminary draft phase of the plan process, a widely advertised public workshop was held on a Saturday in the Park. This included two formal presentations of the plan as well as informal interaction between the public, City staff and consultants. Public comments and questions were recorded and incorporated into plan development.

Coordination between Precise Plan consultants for the Central Mesa and Inspiration Point areas was also conducted as part of the design development process.

A major component of the Precise Plan process was the historical research analysis. The National Park Service reviewed the draft plan and made recommendations to preserve the historic landmark status of the Central Mesa.

In order to quantitatively evaluate the impact of the proposed changes, a carrying capacity study for the Central Mesa was completed during this preliminary phase. (See ERA Inc., Carrying Capacity Report in the Appendix)

Organization of the Plan

The plan is organized according to a chronological pattern which begins with the establishment of historic context, continues with an analysis of present conditions, and concludes with specific recommendations for the future.

