



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 24, 2007

TO: Park and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: PR Zone Findings for Santa Barbara Zoological Garden Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission make the PR Zone findings for the Santa Barbara Zoological Garden Master Plan.

DISCUSSION:

The Park and Recreation Commission is being asked to make the PR Zone findings for the Santa Barbara Zoological Garden Master Plan as required by the Municipal Code:

The Park and Recreation Commission...shall review and make the findings when approving or denying a project pursuant to §28.37.010.B

The Santa Barbara Zoological Gardens is a City-owned property with a PR Zone designation and is classified as a Regional Park.

The City accepted the development application for the Santa Barbara Zoological Gardens Master Plan for 30-day review on June 30, 2006. The Master Plan submittal has several components, highlighted below. The Discovery Pavilion, Condor Exhibit, Wave, and Service Yard are all part of the Master Plan for purposes of environmental review of the master plan. Also included are the Channel Island Fox Renovation, which previously expired, and the Langur/Lemur Renovation, which is new for review.

The Commission received a presentation from representatives of the Zoo at their October 25, 2006 meeting. Richard Block, Director, provided background regarding the master plan and showed renderings of each of the proposed improvements.

On December 21, 2006, the Planning Commission approved the Mitigated Negative Declaration, making the environmental findings. Additionally, the Commission approved the five of the six Master Plan project components with amended conditions related to:

- Prohibiting an increase over the present number of special events
- Requiring a review of lighting at The Wave

- Direction to consider an outdoor public area with mountain views that is unobstructed by the new Condor exhibit at The Wave, and
- Revising the construction material recycling program to also include demolition materials

Summary of proposed improvements

California Condor Exhibit - Will occupy the footprint of the former Bald Eagle exhibit overlooking the Andree Clark Bird Refuge. It will consist of a mesh containment enclosure and new rockwork similar to existing zoo exhibits.

Langur/Lemur Renovation - Replacement of existing holding facilities, screened with artificial rock and includes black mesh and glass enclosures. The project will not expand the existing footprint.

Discovery Pavilion – Includes renovation and expansion of an existing administration building to consolidate many staff functions into one location. Phase II will construct two new multi-purpose classrooms.

Wave – Replacement of the existing hilltop visitor-serving structure with traditional arbors housing a concession area, catering space, bridal/green room, restrooms, and storage.

Channel Island Fox – Improvements to the current exhibit to provide a more secure environment. The exhibit will provide two separate compounds, each featuring a pair of foxes. The exhibit is located on the east-facing slope that faces the Andree Clark Bird Refuge.

Service Yard – Consolidation and reorganization of service facilities, maintenance, and public program storage within the existing service yard. *(This project component will return to the Planning Commission for project approval at a later date, as requested by the applicant.)*

Required findings

1. That the proposed park and recreation improvements are appropriate or necessary for the benefit of the community and visitors.
 - The Zoo has operated since the 1960s and provides important educational and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
 - The Zoo is committed to maintaining the highest standards in animal care, grounds maintenance and visitor experience.
 - The exhibits are necessary for the Zoo to provide current American Zoo & Aquarium Association recommended standards for lion exhibits.
 - Consolidation of facilities for staff makes better use of the land and more efficient operations.

2. That the proposed park and recreation facilities, including lighting, play areas, parking facilities and associated landscaping, will be compatible with the character of the neighborhood.
 - Night lighting will be for emergency/security purposes only, consistent with existing Zoo exhibits.
 - Transportation staff determined that areas of the zoo parking lot will be re-striped to more efficiently utilize the existing parking area.
 - The construction of the exhibit spaces will be of the same nature as existing facilities, using black mesh, rockwork, and will require minimal grading.
 - The Discovery Pavilion will be designed to match existing buildings in the immediate vicinity, and the service yard will not expand beyond the current location.
 - The Wave will be situated in the same area as the existing arbor.
3. That the total area of the site and the setbacks of all facilities from the property lines and street are sufficient, in view of the physical character of the land, proposed development and neighborhood, to avoid sufficient negative impacts to surrounding properties.
 - The Condor exhibit will occupy the area currently used for the original Bald Eagle exhibit, and the Langur/Lemur and Island Fox exhibits are renovations of the existing facilities.
 - The Discovery Pavilion will occupy the location of existing one-story buildings, and is set back from the north property line.
 - The Wave will be designed similarly to the existing arbor at the hilltop and will use the same trellis motif as the current structure.
4. That the intensity of park use is appropriate and compatible with the character of neighborhood
 - None of the proposed improvements are anticipated to create a significant intensification of current activities.
5. That the proposed park and recreation facilities are compatible with the scenic character of the City of Santa Barbara.
 - The Discovery Pavilion will be designed to blend with existing buildings in the same area of the zoo.
 - Landscaping will provide additional screening.
 - The exhibit enclosure will be a mesh painted black to reduce visibility and blend into the background.

6. That any proposed structures or buildings are compatible with the neighborhood in terms of size, bulk and scale or location.
 - The Island Fox, Condor, and Langur/Lemur exhibits will not expand beyond their current footprint.
 - The Wave will expand beyond the size of the current arbor, but will be located far from surrounding neighbors and will retain a one-story height.
 - The Discovery Pavilion will be constructed along the northern property line of the zoo and abuts the railroad and Highway 101.
 - Project has received positive comments from the HLC
 - Project has received CDP and Development Plan Approval by the Planning Commission

Staff recommends that the Commission make the PR Zone Findings

SUBMITTED BY: Billy Goodnick, Landscape Architect

APPROVED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director