

DATE ISSUED: September 15, 2004

REPORT NO. 04-195

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council  
Docket of September 21, 2004

SUBJECT: Amending the General Plan and Balboa Park Master Plan - Veterans  
Memorial Garden

REFERENCE: Amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan

### SUMMARY

#### Issues – Should the City Council:

1. Certify the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Veterans Memorial Garden in Balboa Park?
2. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Mitigated Negative Declaration?
3. Approve the proposed amendments to the General Plan and Balboa Park Master Plan?

#### Manager's Recommendations –

1. Certify the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Veterans Memorial Garden in Balboa Park.
2. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Mitigated Negative Declaration.
3. Approve the proposed amendments to the General Plan and Balboa Park Master Plan.

Other Recommendations – The following groups have reviewed and considered the proposed project. Actions taken and recommendations made by these groups are listed below.

- Balboa Park Committee
- Park and Recreation Board’s Design Review Committee
- Park and Recreation Board
- Planning Commission

Fiscal Impact – None with this action.

## BACKGROUND

One of Mayor Murphy’s top priorities with regard to Veterans’ issues is the construction of a Veterans Memorial Garden in Balboa Park, adjacent to the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center. The Veterans Museum Memorial Center is located in the former Navy Chapel building in the Inspiration Point North area of Balboa Park. The garden would comprise approximately three acres of land that is currently occupied by dilapidated tennis courts, access roads, parking lots and turf.

In March of 2001, Mayor Murphy formed a Veterans Affairs Advisory Board. The board contains members and retirees of such groups as, but not necessarily limited to, the US Navy, US Marine Corps, US Air Force, US Army, Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, Veterans Journal, Navy League, Cal-Diego Paralyzed Veterans, One VA Community Advisory Board, Vietnam Veterans of San Diego, United Veterans Council, the Distinguished Flying Cross and Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery.

The City of San Diego is widely considered to be a military town. The Army, Navy and Marines all have or have had bases in San Diego, and have helped shape the local landscape and economy. The City of San Diego is also a leader in the aeronautical and aerospace industry. After much discussion, the Veterans Affairs Advisory Board agreed that the garden should not only be a memorial to veterans but also a memorial to the City of San Diego and its military and aerospace history. The Mayor and the Veterans Affairs Advisory Board contracted the firm of Austin Veum Robbins Partners (AVRP) to assist them in preparing a schematic design for such a garden.

Funding became available in mid 2003 for further development of the design and implementation of a portion of the garden. It was determined that, due to limited funding, the garden would need to be constructed in phases. The Veterans Affairs Advisory Board recommended that the first phase of the garden be the Air Garden since it presents the least impact to existing conditions and could be accomplished with the funding available. Also, the B-24 Bomber Club has been actively raising funds for a sculpture to be donated to the City that would be suited to the Air Garden. Subsequently, the Park and Recreation Department contracted with AVRP to continue their design efforts for Phase I of the Veterans Memorial Garden.

On February 6, 2003, the Balboa Park Committee voted unanimously (8-0-1) to endorse the initiation of an amendment to the Balboa Park Master Plan to incorporate Phase I of the Veterans Memorial Garden.

On June 5, 2003, the Planning Commission authorized the initiation of a plan amendment to the Balboa Park Master Plan to incorporate Phase I of the Veterans Memorial Garden.

On January 22, 2004, the Balboa Park Committee voted unanimously (7-0-1) to recommend approval of the proposed plan amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan.

On February 11, 2004, the Park and Recreation Design Review Committee voted unanimously (5-0-1) to recommend approval of the proposed plan amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan.

On June 17, 2004, the Park and Recreation Board voted unanimously (7-0-1) to recommend approval of the proposed plan amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan.

On July 22, 2004 the Planning Commission voted unanimously (6-0-0) to recommend approval of the proposed plan amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan.

The City of San Diego, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has prepared and completed a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed Plan Amendments and General Development Plan. Mitigation measures were prescribed for Archaeological Monitoring and Native American Monitoring. The Mitigated Negative Declaration, and associated Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), Project No. 27829, dated June 29, 2004, are attached.

## DISCUSSION

Phase I of the proposed Veterans Memorial Garden will be located on approximately one acre of land located between the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center and Park Boulevard. The existing tennis courts will be removed and existing mature trees will be retained. The existing roads and parking surrounding the site will also remain. Please see the attached existing conditions site plan.

Phase I of the garden will contain three separate smaller gardens to honor those who have served our country on land, in the air and at sea. The three areas are tentatively called the Land Garden, the Air Garden and the Sea Garden. At the center of the garden will be the Veterans Circle, which is a paved amphitheater with stepped seating. Based on input received from the Park and Recreation Board's Design Review Committee, the project was redesigned to accommodate all three Gardens. Any future phases of the garden will allow expansion of the Land, Air and Sea Gardens, and will allow incorporation of the Story Garden and the Museum Garden. The Story Garden would contain informal walkways, seating and landscaping, and would provide intimate spaces for people to gather and tell stories. The Museum Garden would provide informal

plantings around the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center.

The Veterans Circle is located at the center of the gardens, and unites the gardens with the principles of honor, duty and country. The Veterans Circle will provide an amphitheater setting with seating built into the slope and a plaza at the center. The paving in the plaza will be decorative colored terrazzo with spiraling accent bands that lead to the Land, Air and Sea Gardens. The spirals leading to the Land, Air and Sea Gardens will contain quotes relating to each. These quotes will be etched into the paving. The exact text of these quotes has not yet been determined. Low seat walls will be provided at the perimeter of the Veterans Circle for additional seating. These seat walls will have a concrete cap with a stone veneer. An axial walkway leads from the Veterans Circle toward the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center. The walkway will be lined with flags representing the different branches of the service, including the State of California flag. The United States flag flies adjacent to the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center. The flags will be provided by the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, and will be taken down at night. The amphitheater can be used for outdoor education, story telling or as a gathering space for events.

The Land Garden is located to the northwest of the Veterans Circle and is intended to honor those who have served on land in all branches of the military. A concrete walkway helps define the space for the Land Garden. The concrete walkway will have integral color with alternating panels of light sandblast finish and broom finish. Currently there is no sponsor for the Land Garden, and no final design for special features has been proposed. However, the space has been provided. The Land Garden is a later phase, and will be implemented as funding becomes available.

The Sea Garden is located to the northeast of the Veterans Circle and is intended to honor those who have served at sea in all branches of the military. A concrete walkway helps define the space for the Sea Garden. The concrete walkway will have integral color with alternating panels of light sandblast finish and broom finish. Currently there is no sponsor for the Sea Garden, and no final design for special features has been proposed. However, the space has been provided. The Sea Garden is a later phase, and will be implemented as funding becomes available.

The Air Garden is located to the south of the Veterans Circle and is intended to honor those who have served in the air in all branches of the military. The concrete walkway will have integral color with alternating panels of light sandblast finish and broom finish. A scaled replica of a B-24 Liberator bomber airplane will be mounted on a plinth above a reflecting pool. The replica will be cast of bronze, and will have a wingspan of approximately eighteen feet. The plane will be pointing toward the former site of the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation factory in Point Loma, where a large number of the aircraft were constructed. The reflecting pool will have an infinity edge with water spilling over. The interior of the reflecting pool will have a simple plaster finish. Low seat walls will be provided at the perimeter of the paving surrounding the reflecting pool. These seat walls will have a concrete cap with a stone veneer.

The B-24 Liberator bomber airplane played a significant role in the development of San Diego. The airplane was designed by Ruben H. Fleet at Consolidated Aircraft Corporation in Point Loma. Of the 19,000 B-24s built during World War II, approximately 6,700 of them were constructed in San Diego by Consolidated Aircraft. The B-24 was the largest production aircraft during World War II. At the peak of production, approximately 41,000 San Diegans were employed by Consolidated Aircraft in the production of the B-24, representing approximately 20% of the population of San Diego County. The term “Rosie the Riveter” was coined at Consolidated Aircraft as a result of the incorporation of women into the work force. The B-24 Liberator was flown by the US Army Air Corps, the US Navy, the US Marine Corps, Great Britain’s Royal Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The site of the Veterans Memorial Garden has existing light standards located along the eastern edge. A large flood light for the parking lot is located along the western edge. Additional decorative light standards will be provided at the entrance from the existing parking lot on the southern edge and at the Veterans Circle. The new light standards will match the existing light standards, which are consistent with the Master Plan and Precise Plan.

In conclusion, the Veterans Memorial Garden will provide for the development of a one-acre garden in the Inspiration Point North area of Balboa Park. The Garden will serve as a memorial to those who have served our country on land, in the air and at sea. The Garden will also serve as a community resource for education and for special events. Approval of the proposed plan amendments will allow staff to proceed with the design and construction of the Veterans Memorial Garden.

#### ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the City Manager’s recommendations with modifications.
2. Do not approve the City Manager’s recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ellen Oppenheim, Director  
Park and Recreation Department

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Approved: Bruce A. Herring  
Deputy City Manager

OPPENHEIM / CD

Note: The attachments are not available in electronic format. A copy is available for review in the Office of the City Clerk.

- Attachments:
1. Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program
  2. Balboa Park Master Plan Amendments
  3. General Development Plans for the Veterans Memorial Garden