

**PARK BOULEVARD PROMENADE  
APPLICATION BY THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO**

**AMENDMENTS TO THE BALBOA PARK MASTER PLAN AND  
CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN**

**Submitted by the Zoological Society of San Diego**

**Prepared by:  
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**June 11, 2001**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

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**CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN**  
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**Introduction**

The Zoological Society of San Diego is proposing amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan and the Central Mesa Precise Plan. The amendments would allow implementation of the Park Boulevard Promenade.

For this initial submittal, the Zoological Society has been instructed to describe and illustrate the project. The city will later advise the applicant on the city preferences on how to show the literal changes to the park plan documents.

Underlying the brief presentation in this submittal is a year long effort of the city's Working Group. Substantial background information was presented by diverse interests. This information and the design charette results shaped the proposal embodied in this application.

This concept plan emerged from working group input and as a consequence strives for improvements and enhancements to Balboa Park beyond those directly related to Zoo operations. This successful collaboration illustrates how solutions can be responsive to the interests and needs of diverse entities.

This initial submittal on the Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Plan Amendments is organized as follows: Brief Overview of the Project, Major Plan Goals, Major Plan Components, and Overview of Vehicle Access.

Attached is the Executive Summary of the report entitled: "An Examination of the Space Needs of the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park". This report among others were produced as part of the year-long Working Group deliberative process. A Working Group Final Report, dated December 14, 2000 includes the full report and other valuable background information. This Final Report is on the city's website or contact Sandra Teasley, the Project Manager in Land Development Review.

**Brief Overview of the Project**

The Park Boulevard Promenade reawakens the Central Mesa Precise Plan, developed more than a decade ago as a vision for the future of Balboa Park cultural and recreational areas. Elements of the new concept address parking and access to Balboa Park without impacting the War Memorial Building or Florida Canyon.

Access to Balboa Park is improved by increasing the number of parking spaces and creating, attractive and efficient north and southbound transit stops on Park Boulevard with a new pedestrian bridge. Strength has

been given to the pedestrian and park links between the Zoo and the Prado areas of Balboa Park by increasing the amount of usable park space and eliminating surface asphalt parking lots.

The Spanish Village, Carousel and miniature railroad are emphasized as part of an enhanced family-oriented destination featuring historical resources. Opportunities are created for the east side of Spanish Village to be opened up to a vibrant pedestrian plaza area. The new locations of the Carousel and train are integral to this new plaza/promenade.

Other attributes of the concept plan provide opportunities for the Zoological Society to improve and increase its animal and botanical exhibit space within current Zoo leasehold boundaries. A new below grade four level parking structure will provide 4,725 spaces for automobiles. More than a third of the parking structure, which extends approximately a quarter mile along Park Boulevard, is located below the area currently leased by the Zoological Society. The concept maintains important service access for Balboa Park institutions supporting daily operations.

The structure also includes a transportation center for shuttles, taxis and tour buses as well as school buses serving Balboa Park museums and attractions. Landscaped pedestrian walkways and plaza areas on top of the parking structure replace an area currently dominated by asphalt surface parking lots. This creates an enhanced continuous green belt along Park Boulevard extending from the fountain near the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center to the grassy lawn around the War Memorial Building.

### **Major Plan Goals**

The plan should:

- *Fulfill as many of the Balboa Park Master Plan and Precise Plan Goals as possible;*
- *Provide additional space for zoo exhibits;*
- *Maximize the pedestrian experience for all users of Balboa Park;*
- *Provide a "green" link between the War Memorial lawn area and the Prado area;*
- *Complement surrounding uses;*
- *Enhance and improve the visual experience from Park Boulevard;*
- *Promote the use of alternative transportation systems;*
- *Create a strong physical and visual link between the Zoo entry and the Spanish Village/Prado area.*

### **Major Plan Components**

#### Additional Zoo Exhibit Space

Approximately 21.83 acres of land that are currently primarily used for parking will become Zoo exhibit area. The design of this area is not shown on the plans as it is considered internal to the zoo and not a part of the Precise Plan. However, certain elements that occur on the perimeter and affect the adjacent land use such as entry locations are indicated.

### Zoo Drive

The existing Zoo Drive will become a one way (westbound/southbound) from Park Boulevard to a new cul-de-sac that will be located just northwest of the War Memorial Building. Parking will be prohibited immediately in front of Roosevelt Middle School so that student drop-off and pick-up can occur. In addition, eastern curb will move westward to provide more open lawn area. However, with the exception of the loading/unloading zone, parking will still be allowed on both sides of the street. From the new cul-de-sac southward, Zoo Drive will become a two way street.

Zoo Drive will continue to loop around the War Memorial Building and connect with Park Boulevard at a new intersection just east of the War Memorial Building. The new intersection will be signalized and incorporate a new northbound left turn lane on Park Boulevard.

### War Memorial Area Parking Lot

Approximately 96 public parking spaces will be provided just south of the War Memorial building. These spaces in combination with nearby on-street parking will accommodate the majority of the events in the War Memorial Building and adjacent lawn area. In the event of special large events, the new underground "Park Boulevard Promenade" parking structure (less than ½ mile south) can be used for overflow parking or possibly arrangements may be made with the School District to use the decomposed granite field on the Roosevelt Middle School site. 18 accessible spaces will be provided adjacent to the south entry of the building.

### New Group Entry

To help alleviate congestion at the main Zoo entry, a new group entry area will be located south of the War Memorial area parking lot. School groups and other groups will use this entry. A bus loading/unloading zone and a van/automobile loading/unloading zone will be located adjacent to the entry area. Buses will enter and exit the area via the new intersection at Park Boulevard.

### New Balboa Park Northern Gateway Statement

Nearly all the charrette options strongly recommended improved gateway markers for Balboa Park. It is proposed that the Northern Gateway statement be on Park Boulevard just south of Upas Street. The design will reflect the design character of Balboa Park.

### New Park Boulevard "Green" Link

A new public "green" belt will be located along the west side of Park Boulevard between Zoo Place and the new intersection at Park Boulevard and Zoo Drive. This green belt will create a link between the lawn area adjacent to the War Memorial Building southward to the core of the park. The green belt will vary in width from 50 feet to 100 feet and incorporate a meandering pedestrian and bicycle path.

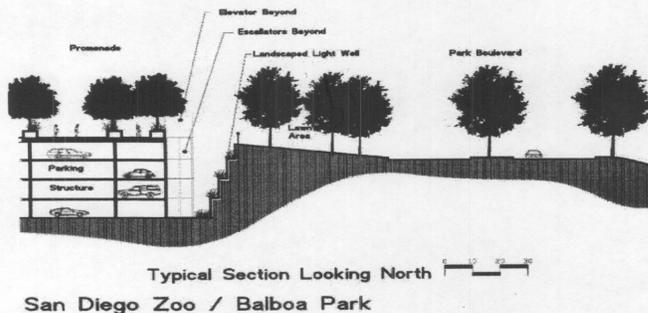
The relocated train route adjacent to this greenbelt, increases the buffer and public accessible area to approximately 150 feet.

#### Relocated Miniature Train and New Depot

The existing miniature train will be relocated adjacent to the new green belt along Park Boulevard. A new depot will be placed at the south end of the train route adjacent to the Zoo Place intersection. It will form the northern termination of the new Park Boulevard pedestrian promenade (described below). The train will continue northward and return just south of the new Zoo Drive intersection. The existing train experience will be recreated or enhanced along the new route. For example, tunnels, topography and views into the Zoo and eastward will be created for the train passengers. The condition of the existing tracks will require that new tracks be constructed, rather than re-used. The possibility of restoring the existing train equipment is being explored.

#### New Parking Structure

A key element of the proposal is the inclusion of a new four level underground parking structure. Approximately 4700 spaces will be provided. The surface level elevation of the structure will approximate the existing grade. All cars will be below grade with the surface of the structure accommodating either the new Park Boulevard pedestrian promenade, landscaping, Zoo entry plaza or internal zoo exhibit space. A main feature of the structure will be a series of light wells that will provide natural light and a sense of direction for the user of the structure. The concept is illustrated below.



The main entry and exit into the structure will occur at Zoo Place with a secondary entry and exit at Village Place. The southern portion of the structure will incorporate a transportation center for the park. The first level below the surface in this area will provide alternative transportation vehicles, such as taxis or hotel shuttles, with a loading and unloading station. This location is convenient for the users of the Prado as well as the Zoo.

#### New Sculpture/focal Point

At the northern end of the new Park Boulevard pedestrian promenade, an opportunity for a significant sculptural element will be provided. This location will allow the sculpture to be visible from Zoo Place, Park Boulevard, the Zoo entry Plaza and the Prado to the south.

#### New Zoo Entry Plaza

A new Zoo entry plaza will be located just north of the Spanish Village. One of the goals of the plan was to strengthen the relationship between the Zoo and the rest of the Prado. Placing the entry plaza in this location allows for the user of the Zoo to immediately relate to the rest of the park. A strong visual as well as physical tie will be created.

#### New Park Boulevard Pedestrian Promenade

The mechanism that will create the link between the Prado and the Zoo entry will be a new Park Boulevard Promenade. One will be able to directly view the new train depot from the Bea Evenson Fountain north of the Space Theater at the east end of the Prado. A new formal pedestrian promenade will be created along this sight line and will incorporate seating, fountains, landscaping and trees. A computer simulation illustrating what this promenade might look like has been included in our submittal package. A new, direct two way linkage between the Prado and the Zoo will exist when the promenade is completed.

#### Spanish Village Enhancements

Our proposal will create opportunities for the Spanish Village to be enhanced as specified in the Precise Plan by providing connection points and linkages from Spanish Village to the new promenade and Zoo entry plaza on the east side of Spanish Village. This will create an alternative route from the Zoo to the Prado and help vitalize Spanish Village.

#### Relocated Carousel

The existing Carousel will be relocated just east of the Spanish Village along the new promenade. This location will help create a strong three way synergy between the miniature train, the Zoo entry and the Carousel resulting in a lively and exciting pedestrian space.

#### Village Place

The public will continue to be able to access Village Place. However, the street will travel under the new Park Boulevard pedestrian promenade eliminating conflicts with pedestrians. Upon surfacing, Village Place will terminate in a cul-de-sac drop off northwest of the large Fig Tree and south of the Spanish Village main entry. This is the solution specified in the Precise Plan. It allows for service access only to continue westward and southward. The Old Globe and the Museums will continue to have service access, but not the general public.

#### New Park Boulevard Transit Station/rebuilt Pedestrian Bridge

A new enhanced transit station will be located along Park Boulevard northeast of the Natural History museum. The proposed MTDB Transit First Plan has indicated that Park Boulevard through Balboa Park has the potential to be a major "red line" corridor. The location of the new station is conveniently located between the new Zoo entry and the Prado. This location allows for transit users to access the Zoo, Spanish Village and the Prado area with ease. As specified in the Precise Plan, new shelters will be constructed on both the east and west sides of Park Boulevard that are complimentary of Balboa Park architecture.

The existing pedestrian bridge across Park Boulevard is too narrow and not suitable as a major pedestrian bridge. A new, wider bridge will be built in alignment with the axis created by the Junior Theater. New pedestrian ramps will be located east of Park Boulevard in the Desert Garden area. The ramps will be carefully designed to minimize disturbance of the Desert Garden and to provide access to the Rose Garden south of the ramps.

#### Enhanced Junior Theater Promenade

An enhanced east-west pedestrian promenade will travel eastward from the Junior Theater to the new pedestrian bridge described above.

#### New Employee Parking

Parking for 300 employees will be located within the current Zoo fence line. No new access ways are required. Employees will use the existing service entrance off Richmond.

#### Additional Leasehold Request along Richmond Street

The leasehold boundary is proposed to be adjusted to include an approximate .5 acre notch of land along Richmond. This straightening of the leasehold boundary creates the opportunity to more efficiently use the rugged topography within the Zoo's current leasehold by enabling some additional grading of these already graded slopes.

#### New Balboa Park Southern Gateway Statement

A new southern gateway similar to the one described above will be located along Park Boulevard adjacent to the Interstate-5 bridge. It will also incorporate a new Balboa Park information kiosk.

### **Overview of Vehicle Access**

As part of the Park Boulevard Promenade project, access to the proposed parking will be improved over current conditions. The current parking access points and their locations along Park Boulevard will continue to be used; however, a new accessway and signal will be installed on Park Boulevard immediately south of the War Memorial and a new pedestrian bridge will be built near Village Place.

The primary access to the new parking structure will be Zoo Place and Park Boulevard, as it is now for the existing Zoo parking lot. This section of the parking structure has 4180 parking spaces. The intersection will be widened to adequately serve the main parking structure entrance/exit. This location was selected

to continue as the main accessway for parking for many reasons, including a convenient route to/from SR163 via Park Boulevard and a convenient route to/from I-5 via Pershing drive.

Dual northbound left-turn lanes and a southbound right-turn lane are expected on Park Boulevard at Zoo Place. Zoo Place will probably not be widened due to the relatively steep topography east of Park Boulevard. The parking entrance will be designed to accommodate future inbound vehicles without causing delays to through vehicles along Park Boulevard.

The secondary access will be at Village Place. The below-grade taxi and tour bus drop off/pick up is served by this access. It also serves 545 parking spaces.

Additionally, new access will be provided just south of the War Memorial building for school bus drop off/pick up. A separate group-entry into the Zoo will be provided. This intersection may also be used by parents dropping off their children at Roosevelt and by War Memorial Building users.

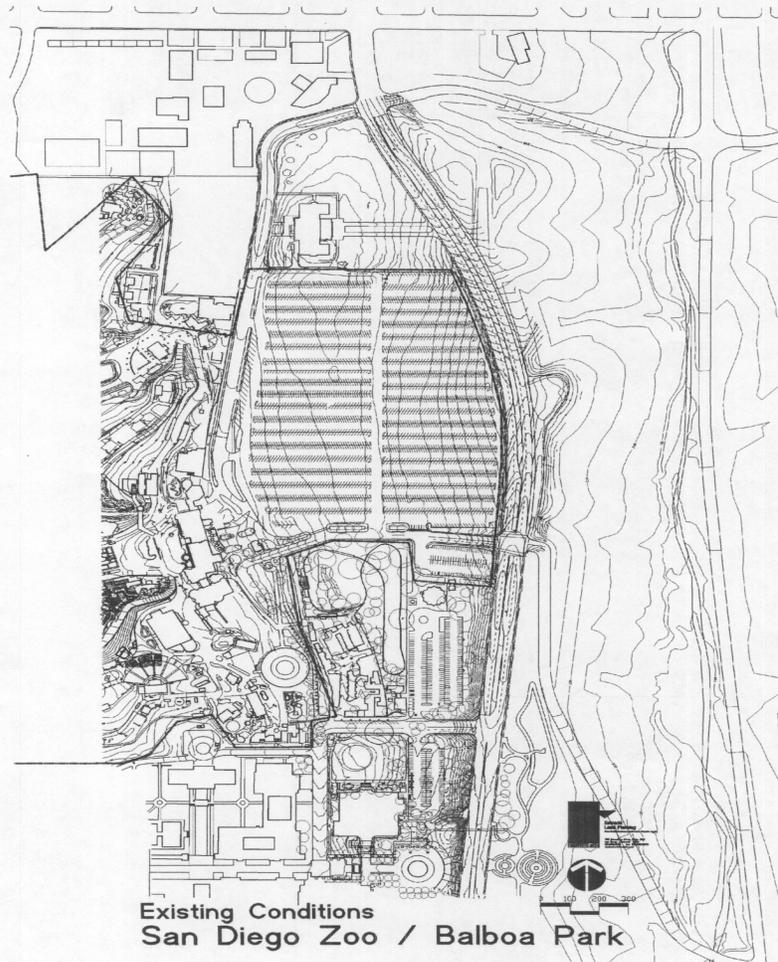
A complete traffic analysis will be prepared by the Zoological Society's traffic consultant upon confirmation of the specific scope by city traffic engineering staff.

### **Illustrations**

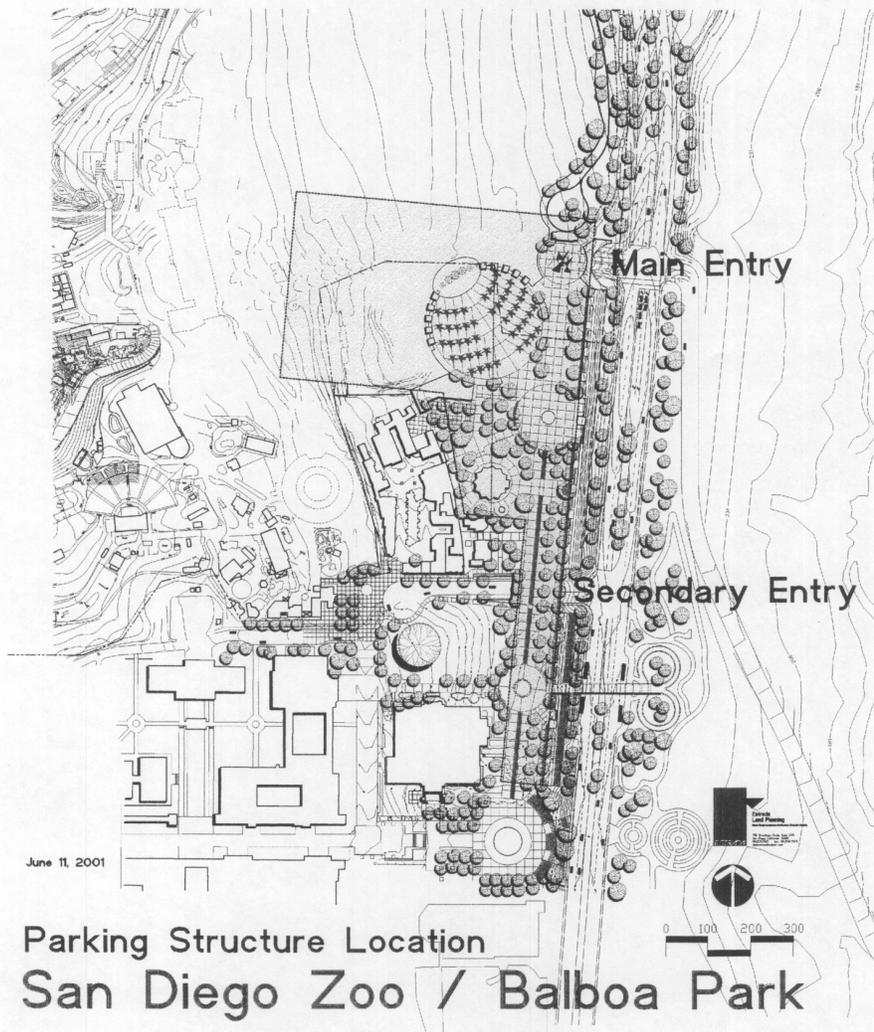
The Concept Plan and related information are illustrated on the attached:

1. Concept Plan
2. Overall Balboa Park Context
3. Existing and Simulated View Looking North from the Prado
4. Aerial Photo
5. Existing Conditions
6. Parking Structure Location
7. Existing Free and Open Park Land
8. Proposed Free and Open Park Land
9. Existing Central Mesa Precise Plan
10. Existing Balboa Park Master Plan
11. Key Dimensions and One Acre Grid Overlay.

A large size version of the concept plan is separate.

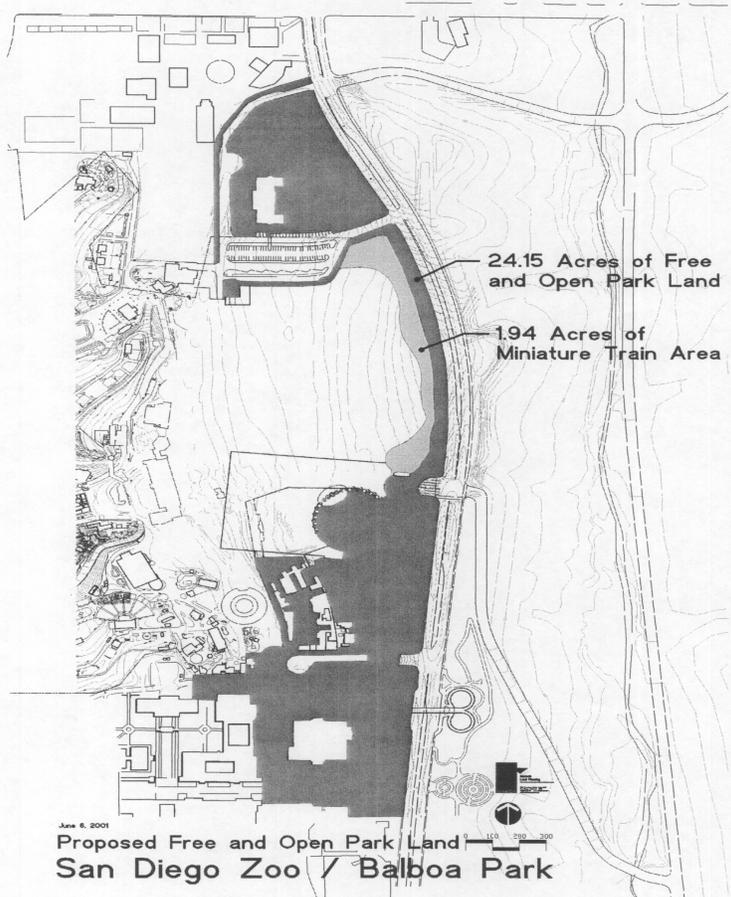


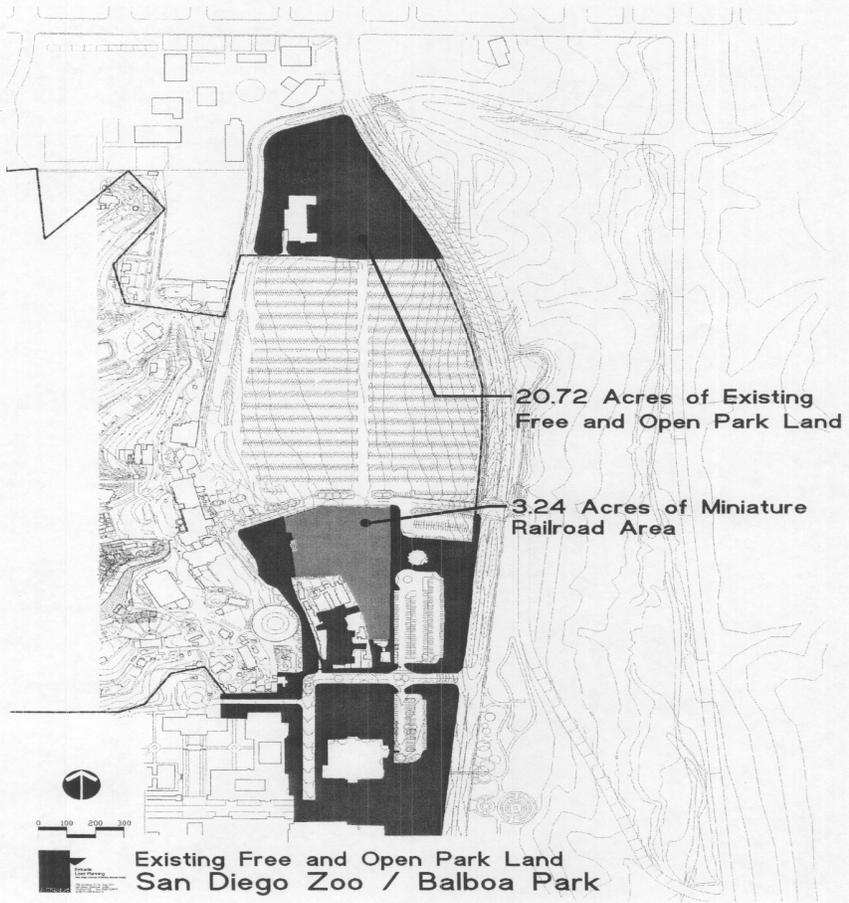
**Existing Conditions**  
**San Diego Zoo / Balboa Park**



June 11, 2001

Parking Structure Location  
San Diego Zoo / Balboa Park





Existing Free and Open Park Land  
San Diego Zoo / Balboa Park



