

Balboa Park Land Use & Circulation Plan, San Diego, CA

with CIVITAS, 2003

Client: City of San Diego



Diagram illustrating park reclamation and improved connections



Aerial of existing park

Balboa Park is the nation's largest inner city cultural park. At 1,400 acres it is almost twice the size of New York's Central Park, and contains the world famous San Diego Zoo and 22 other cultural institutions. The park is separated by two canyons creating three mesas. The park contains historically and culturally significant buildings while displaying natural beauty and providing recreation for its citizens. And this all comes at a cost. During the last century the park has been challenged by significant growth due to institutional expansion, surface parking, and social organizations to the point where the park is out of balance in regard to its carrying capacity.

As project director, I worked with a multi-disciplinary team and led the urban design component of the study. Within the last 40-years numerous master plans have been prepared for the Park, but not implemented. Most of the recommendations in the previously adopted plans are still valid today. Our challenge was to work through over 200 stakeholder groups and an oversight committee to glean viable past recommendations and prepare new strategies to address problems not previously solved, then prepare an implementation plan including significant organization, policy and management changes, and funding and financing strategies. The completed plan provides the city with a roadmap to achieve long-term success.