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CITY OF SACRAMENTO

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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MUSEUM AND HISTORY DIVISION
RECREATION DIVISION
PARKS DIVISION
ZOO DIVISION

April 8, 1986

Budget and Finance Committee
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT: CIP Projects for the Sacramento Zoo and William Land Park

SUMMARY

This report provides information requested by the Committee at the April 1, 1986 meeting concerning input from the Association to Preserve Land Park (APLP) on the 1986-87 CIP Program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department of Parks and Community Services is undertaking a comprehensive study and master plan development for the Sacramento Zoo and surrounding area. In October 1984, the City of Sacramento entered into a consultant services agreement with zoo master planning experts Wildlife Associates, Inc. to provide these services. This planning process, which has spanned a year and a half, has involved extensive input from Zoo, Parks and Administrative Services staff; Zoological Society and Fairytale Town Board members; Holy Spirit School representatives and Land Park residents. A Citizen's Advisory Committee and a Director's Task Force comprised of these various interests have routinely reviewed all aspects of the master plan development to ensure the continued input and adequate representation of these interest groups. In addition, two well-attended public meetings have been held. Wildlife Associates, Inc. will provide a draft master plan later this month. City Council authorization to hire a consultant for the preparation of the Zoo Master Plan Environmental Impact Report will be sought at a future meeting. It is anticipated that the EIR process will take approximately nine months to complete.

Until a plan is adopted, there is a need for continued improvements to the park and the zoo. Sewer reconstruction at 10th Avenue. Land Park drain replacements, and Land Park play apparatus are priority CIP projects which are supported by the APLP.

The Rare Feline Breeding Center has been identified by the Zoo staff and the Zoological Society as the next major zoo improvement following completion of the chimpanzee exhibit. It is intended that the plans to improve exhibits for the entire rare cat collection be completed and construction of Phase I begun during FY 1986-87. While the eventual completion of the entire new cat area may result in a small increase in maintenance costs, it is anticipated that such increase will be partially offset by the simultaneous deletion of the koi pond, jaguar cage, lemur island, puma cage and twelve other small out-dated cat cages. The existing cat exhibits are unattractive and unnatural and are a constant source of public complaint.

Furthermore, it is a goal of the Department to always have a major exhibit and/or visitor services renovation or replacement in progress at the Sacramento Zoo to ensure continued improving of this aging zoo facility and to encourage repeat visitation.

The Zoological Society received a \$75,000 grant from the State of California for the construction of the Zoo Educational Interpretive Center. This grant award, which involved a statewide competition by nonprofit park and recreation organizations, was one of the largest awards made. The Interpretive Center is a small, outdoor amphitheater (approximately 150 seats) for the Zoo's fine educational programs. Small, handleable animals will be housed behind the stage area. Aside from on-site Zoo programs, these animals will be used in outreach programs to schools, churches, and hospitals. On October 30, 1984, the City Council adopted a resolution authorizing an agreement with the Sacramento Zoological Society for construction and usage of this Interpretive Center. On December 26, 1985, the City Council adopted a negative declaration on this project.

The Sacramento Zoo attracts almost one-half million visitors a year. Currently, the sole area for formal presentations and educational demonstrations is the small trailer classroom (capacity 30 persons). The Interpretive Center would be used both for programs for the general public and introduction to the Zoo for the approximately 70,000 school children who visit the Zoo each year. The amphitheater outside the Zoo across Land Park Drive is not suitable for either of these activities.

The improvement of the gift and souvenir facilities at the Zoo and Fairytale Town is important to the Department's goal of increased public service and self-sufficiency with a subsequent reduction in General Fund obligation. March 1985 sales of zoo gifts was approximately \$2,000. This figure increased to \$8,500 in March 1986 with the existence of the new temporary gift trailer. A 1984 study conducted by the Oklahoma City Zoo of twenty different zoos in the United States revealed that the average per capita expenditure on gifts was \$0.41. Based on 1984-85 attendance and a \$0.41 expenditure, annual gross income from gift sales could be approximately \$193,500. Construction of the proposed gift shop would result in added visitor services as well as an increase in income to both the City and the Zoological Society.

In FY 1984-85, the Zoo Division had a self-sufficiency level of 66%. Of twenty-seven major zoos in the United States which are owned and operated by cities, the Sacramento Zoo ranks second (New Orleans ranked first) in its percent of self-sufficiency. In keeping with Department policy, efforts to further increase the Zoo's level of self-sufficiency will continue.

Plans for the Rare Feline Breeding Center, the Interpretive Center, and the Zoo Gift Shop are scheduled for completion in FY 1986-87. Construction of all three of these projects is scheduled for the spring of 1987. General Fund support of \$75,000 was allocated in 1985-86 for the Rare Feline Breeding Center. Both the Interpretive Center and the Zoo Gift Shop projects contain funds from the Sacramento Zoological Society only. No General Fund CIP money is recommended for the Zoo in 1986-87. Work should continue on these three zoo projects regardless of the outcome of the Zoo Master Plan. Increases in zoo attendance (Exhibit A), Zoological Society memberships, and general zoo support suggests a renewed interest in this facility and deferring any of these projects could result in a reversal of this support. Completion of any of these projects will not detract from the efficiency of any reasonable master plan for the Sacramento Zoo.

Capital improvements projected for 1986-1991 may include exhibits for snapping turtles, new primate exhibits, a new zoo entrance, a grizzly bear exhibit, and a Sacramento River exhibit. These will all be identified in the master plan.

FINANCIAL DATA

There would be no financial impact for FY 1986-87, as no General Fund CIP monies have been budgeted for the Zoo. Costs of improvements and any future increases in maintenance costs will be identified when plans are completed for these three zoo facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

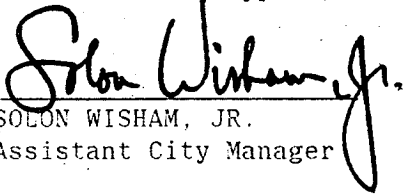
This report is for Committee information.

Respectfully submitted,



ROBERT P. THOMAS, Director
Parks and Community Services

Recommendation Approved:



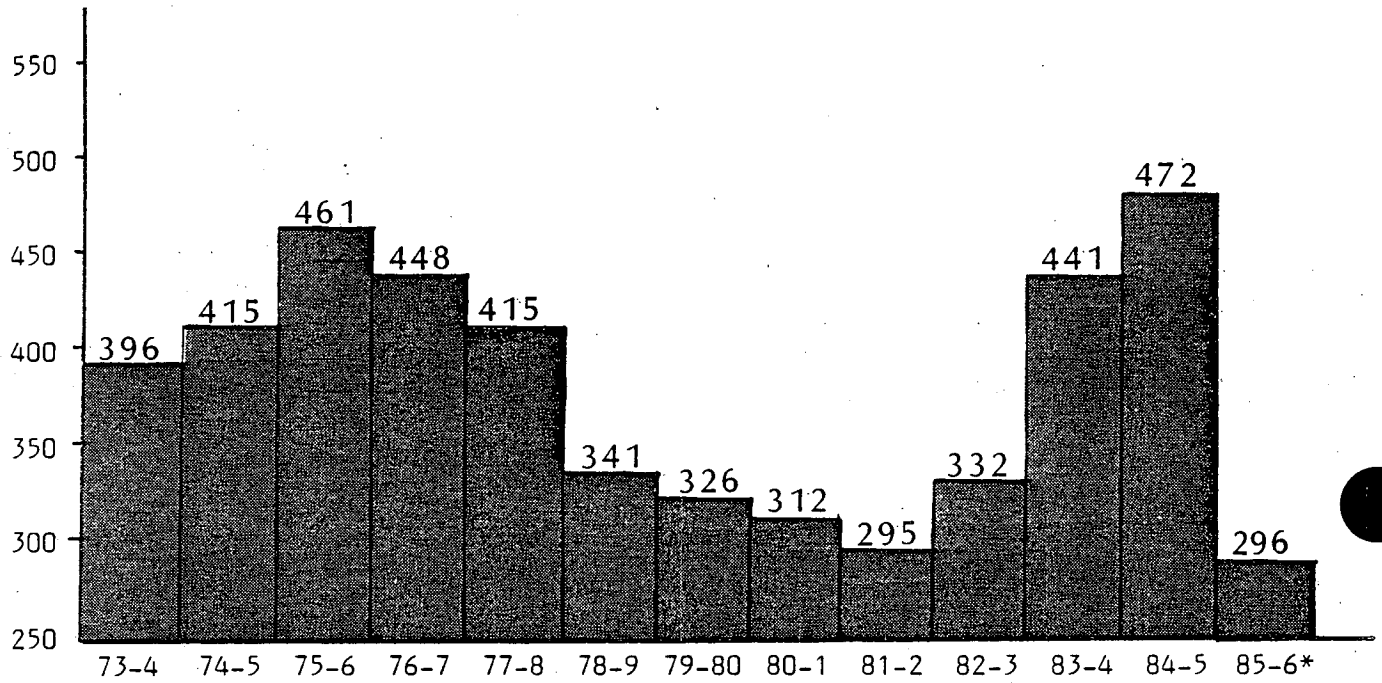
SOLON WISHAM, JR.
Assistant City Manager

RPT:ja

April 15, 1986
District 4

SACRAMENTO ZOO ATTENDANCE

(-000)



* First nine months only.



APLP

ASSOCIATION TO PRESERVE LAND PARK

March 27, 1986

Hon. Joe Serna, Chairman
Budget and Finance Committee
City Council
915 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Joe:

The Association to Preserve Land Park offers the following comments on the City's 1986-1987 Capital Improvement Program. We would have made presentations at your last two committee meetings had we better understood the process. We have limited our comments to major items.

SEWER RECONSTRUCTION - 10th AVENUE (Page 191)

We understand this is replacement of a deteriorating combined local collector and main that is located in back-of-lot easements. Even though such replacements are facts of life in older neighborhoods like ours, the undertaking will prove traumatic to some. We are willing to soften the blow by printing information in our newsletter.

LAND PARK DRAIN REPLACEMENTS (Page 125)

We support this replacement of severely corroded and partially collapsed drain pipes in the park.

LAND PARK PLAY APPARATUS (Page 130)

We wrote a letter of support for the City's application to the State for a grant for this equipment. Our support continues and we will be pleased to assist you on this item any way we can.

ZOO RARE FELINE BREEDING CENTER & EXHIBITS (Page 128)

We strongly support enlarging the cat exhibit areas. However, we have two related concerns about this project in addition to our general comment below. The CIP Operating Impact is listed as \$2,250 for this \$1.1 Million facility. We believe that surely another zoo attendant will be needed to operate such a facility and the maintenance costs will be much higher than those for the present small cages. At least \$50,000 a year must be required. Can the general fund support this major commitment to breeding?



ZOO EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETIVE CENTER (Page 129)

This duplication of the existing William Land Park amphitheater would be constructed in an expanded zoo and funded by the Zoological Society, a state parks grant and the general fund. City Agreement No. 84093 allows the Society to build the facility and commits the City to maintaining it for a minimum of 25 years. We oppose this project as an inappropriate use of park land and City funds. The grant application commits the City to providing a wildlife educational and interpretive center for all of interior northern California and northern Nevada, free of charge to school groups. The CIP Operating Impact is "UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME." We request that the facility be scaled down in size and service area, and that operation and maintenance be defined before any commitments are made.

ZOO GIFT SHOP (Page 138)

While we recognize the potential income to be generated from a gift shop would be used, in part, to improve and operate the zoo, we are troubled by the scale proposed. \$139,000 should pay for a shop the size of the Council's chambers. Obviously, this is more than double the maximum size that might be appropriate. Commercialization of the park was a primary concern of those attending the public hearings held last year on proposed plans for the zoo, so you can expect to hear more on this subject.


(ZOO SNAPPING TURTLE EXHIBIT (Page 138); ZOO PRIMATE EXHIBITS (page 156); ZOO ENTRANCE (Page 168); ZOO GRIZZLY BEAR EXHIBIT (Page 172); ZOO SACRAMENTO RIVER DISPLAYS (Page 174))

We are not familiar with the details of these post 1986-1987 proposals, but we support the concepts and zoo improvements in general.

Regarding all proposals for zoo improvements, we strongly question the efficacy of the timing of these requests because of the on-going master planning process. Either they should be deferred until consideration of the 1987-1988 Capital Improvement Program, or language should be placed in the program being considered which would preclude expenditure of any appropriation until after the EIR for the zoo master plan has been completed and the Council has adopted the master plan. In this way, the City would not be putting the cart before the horse, i.e., funding improvements that may or may not be finally acceptable in the master plan or which may in some way conflict with the final plan.

Please call me at 440-5400 (work) or 455-0281 (home) if you have any questions or wish us to attend your committee meeting(s) to present testimony on these items.

Yours very truly,
Association to Preserve
Land Park



Steven P. Belzer
Chairman

cc: Committee Members Chinn, Johnson and Pope
Betty Masuoka, Budget Officer