



REPORT TO COUNCIL

City of Sacramento

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2604
[www. CityofSacramento.org](http://www.CityofSacramento.org)

Staff Report
July 20, 2010

**Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council**

Title: Sutter's Landing Zoo Feasibility Study Final Report

Location/Council District: Sutter's Landing Regional Park (District 3) and various park sites throughout the City; various Planning Areas & Council Districts

Recommendation: Review & comment on the Sutter's Landing Zoo Feasibility Study Final Report and Sacramento Zoological Society presentation for mid-term improvements at existing Land Park location.

Contact: Scot Mende, New Growth & Infill Manager, 808-4756; J.P. Tindell, Park Planning & Development Manager, 808-1955; Mary Healy, Executive Director, Sacramento Zoological Society, 808-5886

Presenters: Scot Mende, New Growth & Infill Manager, 808-4756; J.P. Tindell, Park Planning & Development Manager, 808-1955; Mary Healy, Executive Director, Sacramento Zoological Society, 808-5886

Department: Community Development

Division: Planning

Organization No: 21001221

Description/Analysis

Issue: This meeting will be an overview of 2 years of work by the City and Zoological Society studying future opportunities at Sutter's Landing Regional Park for the Sacramento Zoo. The City Parks & Recreation and Community Development Departments and Sacramento Zoological Society staff are gathering information to develop recommendations based on: Zoo consultant report, Zoo staff expertise, and stakeholder / public input. The purpose of this evening's workshop is to receive Council and public feedback on work done to date.

Policy Considerations:

The City's adopted General Plan (Education, Recreation and Culture Element) identifies an overarching theme: "The City of Sacramento recognizes the

importance of providing quality education, cultural services, and recreation and parks in making Sacramento a great place to live and do business. Access to education, good jobs, active recreational opportunities, and participation in the arts enhances the city's livability for residents. In addition, a skilled workforce and an engaging cultural environment are important in attracting new industries to the community to keep the city's economy healthy."

Section ERC-5 (Museums, Zoo, and Other Major Destination Attractions) identifies: Policies in this section facilitate the continued operation and new development of diverse facilities and programs that are accessible to residents and visitors alike and maintain and strengthen Sacramento's role as the primary center of culture in the region. These major destination attractions provide important local opportunities for residents and school children to learn about history, science, art, culture, wildlife species, and the environment."

- Policy ERC 5.1.1 Development and Expansion of Attractions. The City shall support the development and expansion of world-class destination attractions throughout Sacramento including museums, zoos, and the Sacramento River and American River waterfronts.
- ERC 5.1.2 New Zoo. The City shall support the relocation of the existing Sacramento Zoo to facilitate its expansion.
- ERC 5.1.3 Educational Activities. The City shall support expanded educational activities at the city's cultural facilities (e.g., Fairytale Town, Sacramento Zoo, Discovery Museum Gold Rush History Center, Crocker Art Museum, Discovery Museum Science & Space Center, and performing arts venues).

In December 1988, the City Council adopted Resolution 88-1076 which identified that any expansion beyond the current zoo fence would require a new EIR. On April 22, 2003, the City Council adopted Resolution 2003-208 which approved the Sacramento Zoo Vision / Concept Plan.

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): Not applicable; this presentation is for review and comment only. For any subsequent detailed analysis of Land Park, previous environmental studies have been prepared in conjunction with the 1988 and 2002 Land Park Master Plan. These studies identified air quality, traffic, parking, noise, and tree & cultural resources potential impacts.

Sustainability Considerations: The Zoo Feasibility Study is preliminary; as more specific recommendations and projects are approved, their consistency with existing City policies and plans for Sustainability and Climate Action will be analyzed, including the region's Greenprint. Interest has been expressed that the Zoo's future needs to exemplify Best Practices for Sustainable design and management, and environmental stewardship education.

Committee/Commission Action: On July 1, 2010, the City's Parks & Recreation Commission received the same informational presentation as will be presented to City Council. The Commission recommended that staff identify a process for deciding what kind of zoo the City wants; and start the process for selecting a preferred site for a future zoo.

Rationale for Recommendation: This report is a workshop only; no recommendation is being made by staff, pending the outcome of the public workshop vetting process.

Financial Considerations: Today's traditional nonprofit zoos are not financially self-sustaining without a significant influx of outside funding. Funding for a relocation/ expansion would need to be supported primarily through a regional funding initiative (public/private partnership). No specific financial information is available at this time.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): No goods or services are being purchased under this report.

Respectfully Submitted by: Scot Mende
Scot Mende
New Growth & Infill Manager, Community Development

Approved by: Max Fernandez
Max Fernandez
Director of Community Development

Approved by: James L. Combs
James L. Combs
Director of Parks and Recreation

Approved by: Barbara E Bonebrake
Barbara Bonebrake
Director of Convention, Culture and Leisure

Recommendation Approved:

Gus Vina
Gus Vina
Interim City Manager

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Background

The feasibility study and public presentations materials are available on the City New Growth – Sutter's Landing Area website:

<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/planning/new-growth/SuttersLanding.cfm>

Of particular interest on the website include:

- Feasibility Study Section A: Introduction & Overview
- Feasibility Study Section E: Alternative site locations for a future zoo
- Feasibility Study Section F: Alternative uses for Sutter's Landing Regional Park
- Materials & Comments from April 21 & 28, 2010, community meetings.

For the past three years, the Community Development Department has been studying Sutter's Landing Regional Park in terms of its potential long term uses. The Sacramento Zoological Society Long Range Planning Committee had identified Sutter's Landing Regional Park as their preferred site for an expanded zoo of the future.

Two community workshops were held in April 2010 to present staff's findings and to solicit public feedback on the technical products prepared to date. The public comments from the community meetings are available on the website shown above. Staff intends to use the information from the technical reports as well as feedback from the public meetings to formulate recommendations to be presented to City Council for their direction. These meetings were held on April 21, 2010, at Belle Cooledge Community Center and on April 28, 2010, at the Hart Senior Center. Each was attended by an estimated 70 people.

It should be emphasized that:

- The decision and actions to move forward with a zoo of the future are long range planning activities (a 20 year timeframe).
- There are no imminent plans to move or expand the zoo; options are provided for preliminary consideration.
- The community and PRC workshops are an important step in exploring those options for the long term future of the zoo.

The Feasibility Study concluded that:

- The current 14 acre site of the Land Park zoo is not sustainable for the future. The changing exhibit requirements, increasing operating costs, and stagnant revenues, are resulting in a zoo that offers fewer exhibits. Parking is limited and cannot fully accommodate visitors on weekends or during busy seasons.
- Sutter's Landing Regional Park is not well suited for a zoo. The site poses a number of tough challenges (e.g., building new access roads and constructing zoo facilities on a former landfill).
- Initial findings are that other sites are potentially better suited for a future zoo.
- Physically, Land Park could potentially accommodate a modest expansion.

Current 14-Acre Zoo Site Not Sustainable

- Much of the current 14-acre site in Land Park is either built out or has mature tree growth that must be protected.
- Land Park site is land locked (i.e. surrounded by existing development).
- Parking is limited and cannot fully accommodate visitors on weekends or during busy seasons.
- The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (the accrediting association) sets forth animal husbandry guidelines which are constantly evolving but almost always require more space.
- With the Zoo limited to the current footprint, husbandry guidelines have resulted in a shrinking animal collection.
- With fewer animals on display, it is difficult to justify increases in admission prices that are necessary to meet higher operating costs.
- City revenue support is diminishing in the current budget climate.
- There is no room for high-end premium experiences (e.g., restaurant, conference, hotel facilities, entertainment venues, fee-based animal encounters).

Evaluation Criteria for a New Zoo

The consultant study was prepared under the following Strategic Assumptions:

- City will provide at no cost:
 - Zoo site at 50-100 acres
 - Access road capable of serving the zoo
- Funding for the relocation/expansion will be supported primarily through a regional funding initiative (public/private partnership)
- Facility improvements could be phased in over a number of years

Sutter's Landing Regional Park Suitability for Zoo

- Access
 - Sutter's Landing Regional Park is currently served only by 28th Street, over the railroad tracks. This route is neither clear nor safe for the increased volume of traffic that a zoo would generate.
 - The City has proposed a new roadway, the Sutter's Landing Parkway, to connect Hwy. 160 to Business 80; the cost of this roadway is at least \$17 million; with a fully improved roadway, at least \$40 million.
- Assembly of Parcels
 - The City owns the former landfill site, but does not yet own surrounding properties, including the Harbor Sand & Gravel operation which creates dust, noise, and heavy truck traffic incompatible with a zoo.
- Cost Premium of Construction on former landfill
 - Construction costs will be significantly higher (to account for ground settling and special drainage treatment); thus, it is expected that construction of a zoo on this site would cost \$625K/acre (\$30 million total for a 50 acre zoo) above the "normal" costs of constructing a zoo on a site without landfill issues.

In addition to Sutter's Landing Regional Park, the consultant conducted preliminary evaluations of other potential sites:

- Natomas Joint Vision
 - This land area has no land use entitlements or habitat conservation permits.
- Arco Arena area
 - This site is part of the Convergence proposal
- Job Corps / Delta Shores Regional Park
 - The southern portion of the Job Corps site has not yet been surplus by the federal government
- North Natomas Regional Park
 - Already programmed for other uses
- Haggin Oaks Golf Course
 - This would require reconfiguration of the existing golf course and there may be competition from other potential users
- Cal Expo
 - This site is part of the Convergence proposal
- Granite Regional Park – east basin
 - This site is difficult to evacuate in the event of drainage pump failure
- Bartley Cavanaugh Golf Course
 - This site would require reconfiguration or elimination of the existing golf course

Note: The top three sites that surfaced from this initial assessment were Natomas Joint Vision, Arco Arena, and Job Corps, though each of these sites have challenges.

Additional Option: Enhancement of Existing Zoo

Staff also asked the consultant to comment on the relative opportunities and constraints of expanding the existing zoo. The consultant concluded that a physical expansion could focus on providing additional parking, improving general traffic flow and school bus drop-off, improving the front entrance, and providing new exhibits, which could include animal interaction. The zoo could potentially expand beyond the current zoo fence as follows:

- by more efficiently utilizing "spaghetti" road space/asphalt in Land Park;
- if Funderland closed and the zoo could expand there; or
- toward Fairytale Town, ballfields, or the golf course, without violating the integrity of those areas

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RESOLUTION No. 88-1076

Adopted by The Sacramento City Council on date of

DEC 13 1988

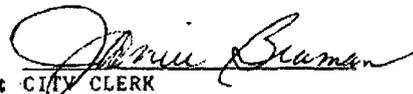
RESOLUTION APPROVING ALTERNATIVE B-3 MODIFIED OF ZOO-2002:
MASTER PLAN FOR THE SACRAMENTO ZOO AND SURROUNDING AREA; AND
ESTABLISHING THE LAND PARK SPECIAL REVENUE FUND ACCOUNT

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SACRAMENTO:

1. That Alternative B-3 Modified of Zoo 2002: Master Plan for the Sacramento Zoo and Surrounding Area, incorporated herein by reference and attached as Attachment I, is hereby approved. Any expansion of the Zoo beyond the exterior boundaries delineated in B-3 Modified of Zoo-2002: Master Plan for the Sacramento Zoo and Surrounding Area Environmental Impact Report, as shown in Attachment I, will require a new EIR.
2. That the need to commit funds for implementation of Alternative B-3 Modified of the Sacramento Zoo Master Plan, and the need to renovate Land Park, requires the establishment of the Land Park Special Revenue Account. Revenues from park permits and amphitheatre and ball field rentals (in paragraph three below) are to be deposited in the Land Park Special Revenue Account as outlined in Attachment II.


MAYOR

ATTEST:

ACTING
Assistant CITY CLERK 

CONDITIONS PERTAINING TO ZOO-2002: MASTER PLAN FOR THE
SACRAMENTO ZOO AND SURROUNDING AREA

1. The formal gardens at the north of the Zoo shall be maintained outside the fence line for public use.
2. The City Engineer indicates that a left turn lane on Sutterville Road entering Land Park Drive appears to be feasible. This project will be submitted and prioritized as part of the normal Street Division CIP budget process.
3. New off-street parking facilities shall not be constructed in William Land Park. Additional off-site parking during peak weekend and holiday periods shall be obtained (if feasible) at the State of California leased office space on Sutterville Road.
4. No pedestrian or other overcrossing or undercrossing traversing Land Park Drive shall be constructed.
5. No lights, with the exception of security lighting, and amplified sound shall be placed on the open space/picnic area of the Zoo located at the northwest corner of the zoo boundaries so as to minimize impact on the adjacent residential area.
6. New perimeter fence lines shall have landscaping installed to improve their unsightly appearance.
7. No animal exhibits or commercial or restroom facilities shall be constructed below the crestline of the slope on the northwest of the Zoo. The purpose of the northwest slope area of the Zoo is to provide a buffer between animal exhibits and the residential neighborhood and for zoo visitor use. Acceptable uses include picnicking, and other open space park uses.
8. Scheduling of all zoo activities shall be coordinated with other park activities on a master Land Park calendar to minimize the simultaneous promotion of major community events.
9. An education/administration building shall be constructed adjacent to Fairy Tale Town according to the adopted plan. The building shall be two stories with a footprint between 4,000-6,000 square feet. The purpose of the facility is to provide educational services. As such, the facility shall include meeting space, classrooms and offices associated with the educational programs. All other administrative offices shall be constructed within the Zoo fence line. The facility shall also be available on a reservation basis to community groups for meetings and programs.
10. The final boundaries for the Zoo shall be Land Park Drive on the east and the fence line on the north (as depicted in the adopted Master Plan). Any further expansion of the Sacramento Zoo or construction of ancillary facilities for the Zoo shall take place elsewhere than in William Land Park.

88-1076
RESOLUTION No. _____

DEC 13 1988

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Attachment 3



Sutter's Landing Zoo Feasibility Study



**City Council
July 20, 2010**

> Agenda

- Evolution of Sacramento Zoo
- Sutter's Landing Feasibility Study
- Other Options for Zoo
- Road Map/Next Steps
- Comments & Questions



> Overview

City commissioned study identified:

- ✓ Current site is not sustainable
- ✓ Sutter's Landing is not well suited for Zoo
- ✓ Other potential sites better suited for future Zoo
- ✓ Land Park could potentially physically accommodate modest expansion



Sutter's Landing Park



**Sutter's Landing
Master Plan Area
Property Owner Map**

City of Sacramento
Community Development Department
April 13, 2010

- Two Rivers Trail
- Sutter's Landing Parkway
- American River Parkway



**SUTTER'S LANDING
INTERIM IMPROVEMENTS**

- SHRUB AREAS AND PLANTINGS
- DECOMPOSED GRANITE
- BUILDINGS

AMERICAN RIVER To River Access

- Existing Planters
- 3 Soccer Ball Courts w/ Shade Canopy
- Renovated Parking Lot
- Existing Bike Trail
- Existing Trail Head
- Existing Fire Station
- Handball Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Restroom
- Future Two Rivers Bike Trail Connection
- Small Dog Park
- Large Dog Park

CITY OF SACRAMENTO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND STREETS
PROJECT MANAGER: City Engineer
DATE: 7/13/10

> *Sutter's Landing Park*

- All 172 acres are closed 28th Street Landfill
- 2003 Park Master Plan; amended 2006 to include potential for regional destination attractions
- Current park uses: Dog Park, river access, trail, indoor skate park
- Coming 2010: Sports courts, improved parking, temp. restroom
- Future: bicycling facilities, sports fields; potential expansion; solar facilities; interpretive facilities; habitat restoration along River bank

>

Sutter's Landing Zoo Feasibility Study

> *Feasibility Study*

- Determine if Sutter's Landing is best site for future Zoo:
 - ✓ Assess site criteria
 - ✓ Identify key constraints
- If Sutter's Landing is not a feasible site:
 - ✓ Identify alternative sites
 - ✓ Preliminarily assess Land Park opportunities
- Develop plan of action

> *Sutter's Landing Key Constraints*

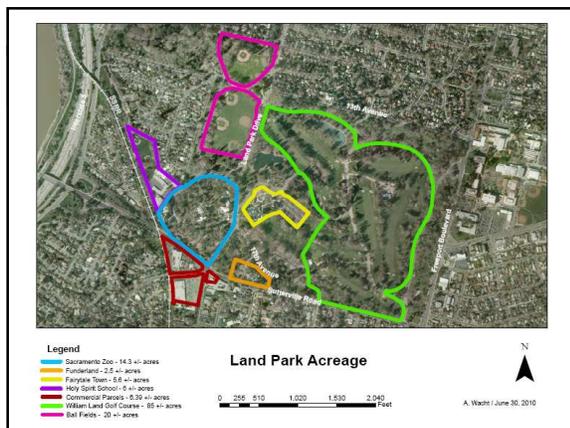
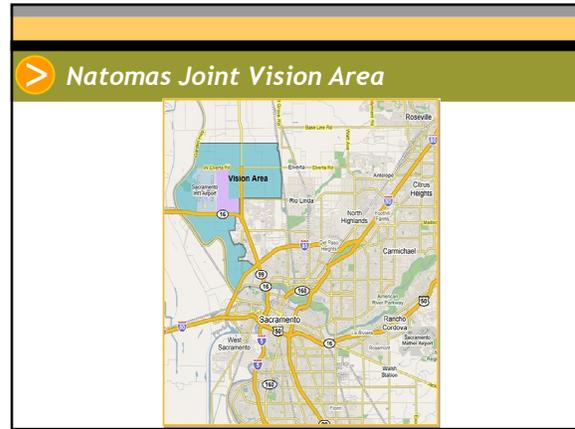
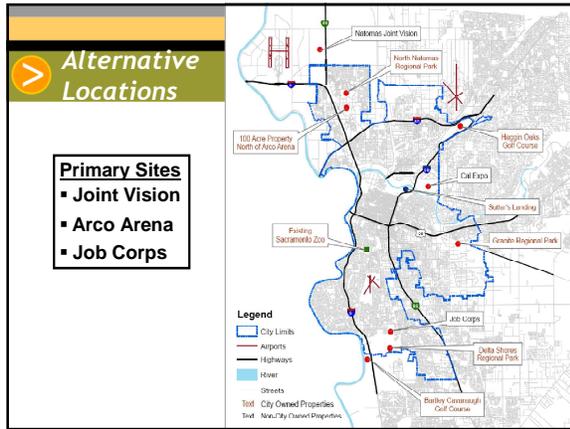
- Access
 - ✓ Clear, safe access to site
 - ✓ Constructing Sutter Landing Parkway critical
- Relocation of non-compatible uses
- Financial "penalty" for site development on landfill
 - ✓ 15% of total construction costs (\$625K/acre "penalty")
- Ground settlement is ongoing

> *Recommendations of Feasibility Study*

- Sutter's Landing has challenges
 - ✓ Higher site preparation costs
 - ✓ Higher cost for access
 - ✓ Acquisition of adjacent incompatible use parcels
- Consider other viable sites
- Expansion or relocation of Land Park site is essential
- Any relocation/expansion must be supported through regional funding initiative

>

Zoo Location Options



ROAD MAP & NEXT STEPS

> *Scenarios for the Future*

- Relocate to Sutter's Landing Regional Park
- Remain at 14 acres at Land Park
- Relocate to Alternative Site
- Enhancements at Existing Land Park site

> *Public Outreach/Next City Meetings*

- 04-21 & 04-28-10 ~ Community Meetings
- 07-01-10 ~ Parks & Recreation Commission
- Staff meetings with stakeholder groups

> *Public Comments*

- *Born Free USA*
- *Sutter's Landing neighborhood*
- *Friends of the River Banks*
- *LPCA*
- *North Natomas Regional Park neighbors*
- *Friends of the Zoo*

> *Parks & Recreation Commission*

- *Identify a process for deciding what kind of zoo the City wants; and start the process for selecting a preferred site for a future zoo*
- *Re-purposing existing utilized park space is far more difficult than re-planning vacant or uncommitted parkland*
- *Decisions and criteria must include financial considerations*
- *Over the next 20 years, the zoo must invest to evolve*
- *After 20 years, the zoo must have significantly expanded or moved*

> *Feedback*

Questions?

Comments?



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Attachment 4

SACRAMENTO ZOO

City Council Workshop July 20, 2010

Presented by Mary Healy
Executive Director
Sacramento Zoological Society

Zoo Visitors

- 500,000 visitors annually from 24 counties
- Visitation far surpasses any other paid year-round attraction in Sacramento
- Free admission to 94,000+ visitors in 2009



The Community

- The Zoo's environmental education programs reach over 75,000 students each year
- The Zoo meets California teaching standards and trains educators in environmental programs



The Community (cont.)

- The Zoo supports other nonprofits through donations and partnerships at Zoo events
- The Zoo is one of only 14 capital cities in the U.S. with art museum, ballet, symphony, opera and accredited Zoo



The Dilemma

- Much of current site is either built out or has mature trees that must be protected
- The Land Park site is landlocked
- City Council Reso 88-1076: no expansion at Land Park

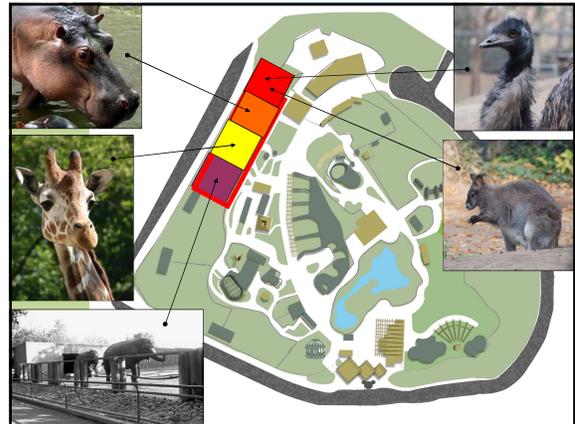


The Dilemma (cont.)

- AZA animal husbandry guidelines constantly evolve but almost always require more space
- Shrinking animal collection



Disappearing animal slide will go here



Expenses/Revenue Imbalance

<p>Increasing Costs</p> <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating Expenses • Labor & Benefits 	<p>Decreasing Revenues</p> <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission Price Maxed Out • Concessions Flat • Reduced City Contribution
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Zoo Society Response to Dilemma

- With opposition to expansion, the best option was to look for new site
- An animal park of the future cannot be just a bigger version of what we have now
- Today's traditional nonprofit zoos are not financially self-sustaining without significant influx of outside funding

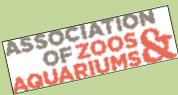
Search for New Site

- Zoological Society formed Long Range Planning Committee in 2002
- Numerous sites in region were considered
- City funded study of Sutter's Landing area
- Opinion of Zoo Society that the premium cost for Sutter's site is not worth the investment
- Numerous other possibilities not immediately viable

What will it take for the Zoo to be viable for the next 3 - 18 years?

Accreditation Schedule

- Next - 2013
- 2nd cycle 2013 - 2018
- 3rd cycle 2018 - 2023
- Accreditation stands until 2028 if no issues



Commitment to Land Park Site

- The Sacramento Zoological Society Board of Directors agrees to enhance and maintain the quality of life for the animals and the quality of the guest experience in Land Park in accordance with AZA standards for the next 20 years.

Phase 1 Internal Improvements Anticipated for Accreditation 2010 - 2013

Phase 1



Remove old primate exhibits
(currently Mangabey and Ring-tailed lemurs)

Phase 1



Renovate the only remaining
outdated grotto exhibit (currently Hyena)

Phase 1



River otters – move out animals or renovate

Phase 1



Reptile House improvements

Phase 2
Internal Improvements
Anticipated for 2018 Accreditation

Phase 2



Renovate or replace Gibbon and small mammal exhibits

Phase 2



Replace Hornbill aviaries

Phase 2



Replace Bateleur eagle exhibit

Phase 3
Internal Improvements
Anticipated for 2023 Accreditation

Phase 3



Front gate improvements

Phase 3



Replace Administration building including animal commissary

Phase 3



Replace Education & Marketing trailers

Renovate lower public restrooms

Enhancements to Land Park Site

- The Sacramento Zoological Society Board of Directors has developed and agreed upon the following list of enhancements that will support the viability of the Sacramento Zoo in Land Park for the next 20 years.

Priorities for Site Improvements

- 1) Visitor Safety
- 2) Parking
- 3) Front Entrance
- 4) Train from Old Sacramento
- 5) Modest expansion if venues become available:
 - a) Funderland
 - b) Pony rides
 - c) Swanston statue area
- 6) Options at Commercial Properties across Sutterville

Visitor Safety
(school groups walking to Zoo, crossing Land Park Drive)



Bus drop off and roundabout ideas from Urban Land Institute (ULI)



Staff Parking

- Options behind Holy Spirit School



Visitor Parking

- Parking structures to replace existing parking lots in William Land Park
- Commercial property (strip center) across the street



Front Entrance

- Add ticket window(s)
- Restrooms
- Membership/Visitor Services office(s)
- Access to shop, concessions prior to entrance to Zoo
- Animal component, i.e. penguins and/or otters



Train from Old Sacramento

- Revenue enhancement
- Parking enhancement



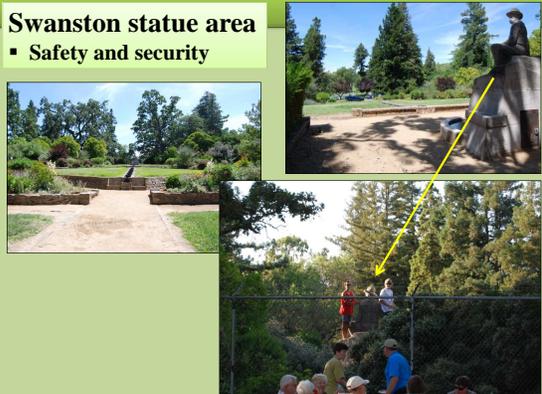
Funderland and Pony Ride future viability

- Funderland lease expires March 31, 2011 with 5 year option available.
- Note: We currently receive about \$50K annually from Funderland.
- Classrooms
- Community Center for all Park residents



Swanston statue area

- Safety and security



Commercial Properties across Sutterville

- Two-story building with suites ranging from 535 – 7,881 sq. ft. (currently renting at \$1.25/sq. ft.)
- Strip center



Resolution

- The Sacramento Zoological Society Board of Directors is committed to the Zoo in Land Park. The SZS Board will remain open to future site opportunities that will allow the Zoo to continue as an AZA accredited zoo beyond 2030.
- Re-visit plans and needs with each AZA accreditation report.