

CHAPTER 8

PARK GOVERNANCE, OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

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8.1 Park Governance, Maintenance & Operations Overview

The management of urban parks has in recent years included a variety of structures depending on the specific situation in each locale. Identifying the right entity to manage a new urban open space and tailoring this oversight to a specific park's needs is a key step. A crucial component to this management responsibility is ongoing park operations and maintenance (O&M). The Master Plan proposes a diversity of spaces, plantings, and habitat creation which all must be maintained at a high-quality in order to effectively serve its intended purpose. To maintain the proposed urban wilderness, operate an Environmental Education Center and regular programming, as well as upkeep on miles of walking paths, acres of native and ornamental planting, and a healthy aquatic ecosystem, all requires an approach which is effective, creative and nimble.

The Master Plan's recommendation for governance is a strategy centered around the formation of an independent, special-purpose, non-profit entity charged with stewarding the build out and operation of the Park. A special-purpose entity can provide the leadership to manage project implementation and long-term operations. It can also fundraise to support capital and O&M costs, with a Board of Directors that is representative of committed project stakeholders.

The Design Team has worked closely with City departments and representatives of elected officials to develop an O&M plan that reflects the current Master Plan vision and incorporates day-to-day maintenance and operational considerations. Estimated O&M costs take into consideration critical design elements of the Park, stakeholder expectations of maintenance standards, the surrounding communities' goals for Park activation, and implications of a potential contribution of taxpayer funds.

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8.2 Park Governance and Operating Structure

To achieve the Master Plan vision, the formation of an independent, special-purpose, non-profit entity named the Silver Lake Reservoirs Park Conservancy (SLRPC) is recommended. Although LADWP will continue to own the land which comprises the SLRC, LADWP is not structured to operate a public park. Additionally, due to the extensive, specialized environmental aspects of the design, RAP does not anticipate operating the Park outside the confines of the Silver Lake Recreation Center, and as such, would no longer operate what is currently The Meadow.

This special-purpose entity could be a completely new entity or represent an expanded role for one of the existing non-profit stakeholders in Silver Lake. If the City's policy makers choose, the entity could provide the leadership to manage project implementation in addition to long-term operations. It can also fundraise to support capital and O&M costs, with a Board of Directors that is representative of committed project stakeholders. If structured to benefit from dedicated resources and funding outlined in Chapter 07, such an entity would be endowed with the staff and budget capacity necessary to: champion a multi-phase implementation process; provide sustainable operations, including maintenance of unique horticulture and wetland spaces to the elevated standard envisioned in the proposed Master Plan; and coordinate revenue allocation with the City that is generated by one or more Community Facilities District(s) and any philanthropic fundraising.

In addition to the SLRPC, a City Oversight Committee comprised of representatives from key City agencies is recommended to ensure that Park capital expenditures and operations align with the guidelines and goals for the Park, providing accountability for the expenditure of public funds. This would be similar to current oversight committees that provide direction on capital expenditure for City funded projects, and this Oversight Committee would forward to full Council and the Mayor recommendations on the expenditure of City funds for full Council and Mayor review and action.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The SLRPC will champion the planning and buildout of the Master Plan, fundraise for the balance of capital needs, and oversee Park O&M. The SLRPC should be led by a Board of Directors charged with upholding and advocating for the Park's vision, hiring and evaluating staff who manage contracts, and conducting fundraising on an ongoing basis. Its staff will also coordinate as needed with LADWP, which has a limited set of responsibilities to maintain dam and related infrastructure and to maintain water levels as required. LADWP will not otherwise participate in ongoing O&M of the Park.

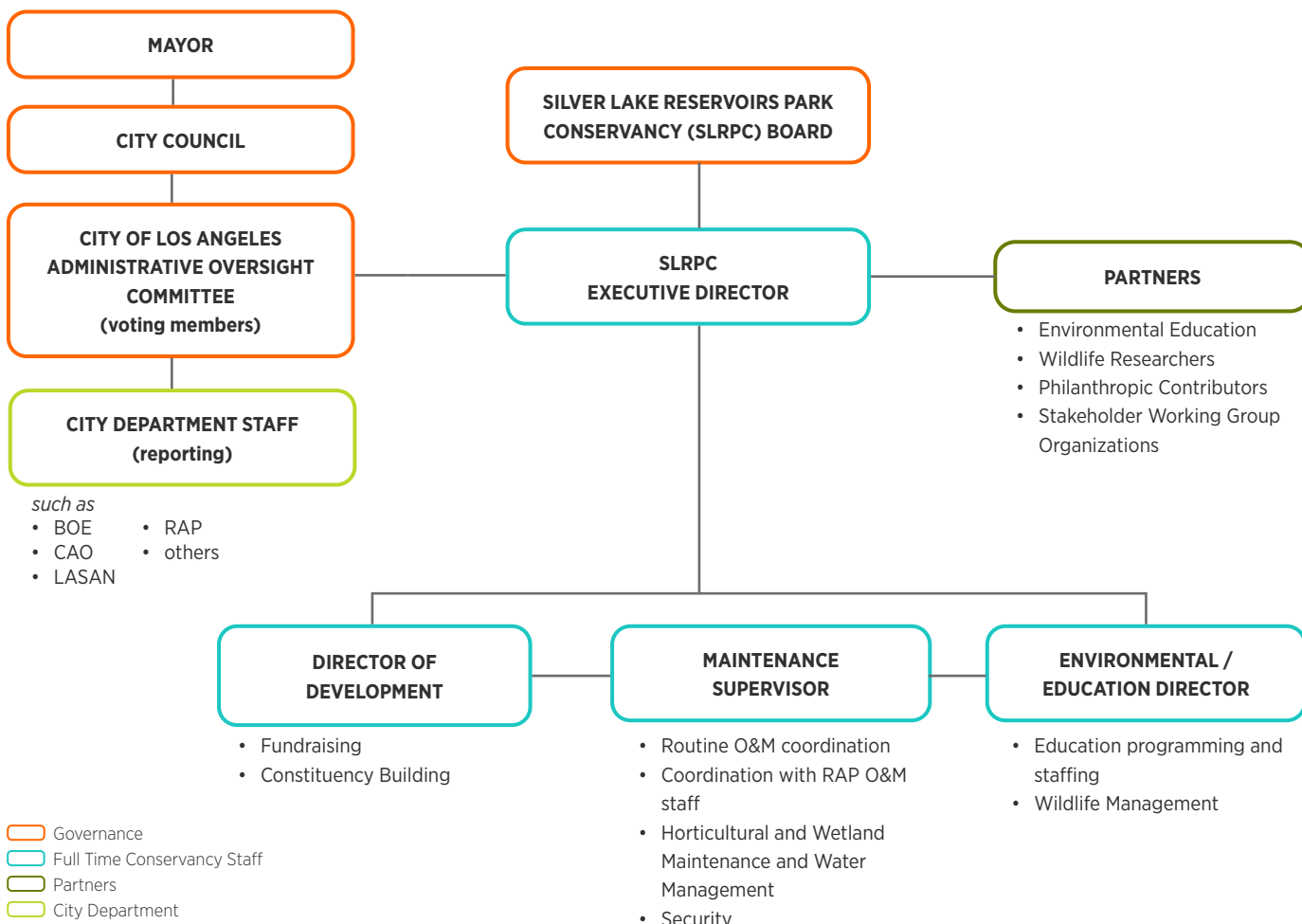
The City will provide oversight for the non-profit through an Administrative Oversight Committee. The need for oversight could fit into the City's existing committee structures, with leadership from the CAO, the Mayor, the CLA, RAP, and LADWP. Additionally, the CAO will serve as the District Administrator of the Community Facility District (CFD) on an ongoing basis. Both the Administrative Oversight Committee and CAO administration of the CFD would facilitate accountability for the use of CFD funds for the Park by ensuring the following: that funds are spent appropriately and according to the Master Plan (including with respect to scope and budget, procurement, etc.); that the Park operates to the standards set forth in the Master Plan and as a City-owned public park (including with respect to accessibility, hours of operation, etc.); and that the Park operates in harmony with the needs of the land owner, LADWP.

Upon the adoption of the Master Plan by City Council and the concurrence of the Mayor, the City will participate in the formation of the non-profit, identifying a project champion to act as a leader in this effort, including participating in assembly of an initial Board of Directors acceptable to City overseers. City participation will support development of the non-profit’s vision, mission, by-laws, and action plans to advance Project implementation.

The composition of the **Board of Directors** of the governance entity will be crucial to a sustainable, inclusive governance structure that will steward the Park through the implementation and operations phases. Upon the creation of the SLRPC, the Board should be composed of a small number of committed stakeholders. This group will sustain the project’s existing momentum to formulate goals, action plans, and fundraising required to advance implementation. In keeping with the community’s desire for a balanced, inclusive open space as reflected during the Master Plan’s community engagement process, the Board should be representative of the diverse communities that will be impacted by the Park.

The governance structure will evolve as the Project progresses. As the Park begins ongoing operations, the structure will shift as the SLRPC shifts focus to operating and management capacities. Board composition and advisory roles will grow to accommodate new functions such as educational programming and coordination of day-to-day operations. A conceptual organizational structure is shown in Figure 8-1.

Figure 8-1 Conceptual Governance Organizational Structure



GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

The non-profit will have the following responsibilities as operator of the Park:

Fundraising: Lead fundraising for capital funding gap and ongoing O&M needs as necessary.

Routine O&M Coordination: Contract for provision of routine O&M. RAP will provide routine O&M on RAP-owned land. There is also potential for one entity to perform O&M for the entire park for economies of scale. This function should be put out to bid, with RAP given the option to pursue along with other park-maintenance contractors.

Horticulture Maintenance, Wetland Maintenance, and Water Management: Manage specialized subcontractors that ensure a high level of care and maintenance for unique park features.

Programming: Manage the Park's Education Center and coordinate additional programming, either directly or through a third party.

Security: Manage security contractor.

8.3 Park Operations & Maintenance

Many elements of the Master Plan design will require careful, dedicated maintenance beyond the standard typical of other City of Los Angeles parks, particularly its emphasis on native plantings and aquatic habitat maintenance, which also includes wetland maintenance. Also note that the communities surrounding SLRC have discouraged intensive programming.

SLRC's budget for O&M developed by consultant HR&A Advisors consists of five main categories:

Routine O&M: Includes the routine cleaning and maintenance of park spaces and park facilities, costs of clearing paths and walkways, trash removal, and cleaning of park facilities such as the Education Center and restrooms. Capital maintenance costs, including capital repairs and equipment purchases, are included in this category. Maintenance staff will have a consistent, daily presence at the park in service of ensuring a high level of care.

Horticulture Maintenance and Water Management: This is a distinct category in keeping with the high level of care and maintenance as well as the extensive Wetland and Upland Habitat zones and Ornamental Gardens envisioned in the Master Plan. Costs will grass cutting and tree pruning, as well as specialized maintenance of plantings and vegetation, including wetland habitats. Water management will include water quality permitting, monitoring, and compliance; and in-lake activities, such as debris removal and maintaining the floating wetland habitat islands.

General Administration: This covers the administration costs of the non-profit entity described above. Costs primarily include staff salaries, materials, office space, and other non-maintenance costs of the operation of facilities such as the Education Center, the programming and operation of which is to be determined.

Security Staff: Security staff will have a daily presence at the Park to provide oversight of the Park's large acreage, address safety concerns related to the reservoir space and unsafe behavior. The conceptual budget described in the following pages accommodates two full-time equivalent security personnel onsite 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Constituency Building: The non-profit entity will need to engage in some activities to support annual O&M costs through fundraising efforts. A significant portion of revenue to support annual O&M will come from the proposed CFD funding structure. Therefore, ongoing fundraising will be limited but will have the potential to offset taxpayer burden and provide a rainy-day fund. The conceptual budget described below accommodates one full-time staff person dedicated to Constituency Building.

APPROACH TO O&M CONCEPTUAL BUDGET

Total O&M costs are estimated at \$3.64 million per year. HR&A developed this estimate through the methods detailed below and in Figure 8-2.

Routine O&M, Horticulture Maintenance, and General Administration Costs Analysis

HR&A examined the O&M costs of comparable urban parks, with a particular focus on local precedents, and selected precedent parks for each cost category based on the parks' relevance to the Master Plan's proposed program and design. Comparable park costs were normalized on a per acre basis and applied to the proposed Master Plan design acreage. Parks with the following characteristics were considered appropriately comparable:

- Medium-sized, urban park
- Located in a relatively low-density area
- Surrounded by predominantly residential use
- Minimal programming or activation
- Substantial non-profit role in management and operation of the park

The following precedents were selected for examination because they demonstrate at least some of the desired characteristics. Brief descriptions of these parks are included in section 8.4 on page 247.

- Echo Park, Los Angeles, CA
- Scissortail Park, Oklahoma City, OK
- San Francisco Botanical Gardens, San Francisco, CA
- Shelby Farms, Memphis, TN

Security and Constituency Building Costs

These costs were calculated on a per FTE salary basis. Security costs comprise full-time salaries plus benefits for a 24/7 onsite security presence, with two security personnel and three 8-hour shifts per day. Salaries for security personnel are based on the City of Los Angeles salary range for a Security Officer position as of January 2020. Constituency Building costs comprise full-time salary and benefits for one staff member. Salary for Constituency Building personnel is based on the typical range for Directors of Development and Directors of Fundraising at non-profit organizations in the Los Angeles region.

Silver Lake Recreation Center New O&M Costs

Additional O&M costs associated with the proposed design at the Silver Lake Recreation Center were calculated based on existing maintenance and programming costs. The Master Plan proposes expansion of the Recreation Center, a new Multi-Purpose Facility, renovation and expansion of the Dog Park, and other landscape features, which will result in increased operational costs for these RAP parcels. These increased costs were estimated based on current maintenance and programming costs on the RAP parcels. RAP's O&M costs are not included in the total proposed Park O&M cost detailed below, but are noted in order to give a full picture of the operational costs associated with the Master Plan design and for RAP budget planning purposes.

CONCEPTUAL ANNUAL O&M BUDGET

A conceptual annual O&M budget of \$3.64 million was estimated based on O&M costs for comparable urban parks and on typical costs for salaries in the Los Angeles region. The use of CFD revenue for specific O&M, administration, and programming services expenditures will need to be reviewed by bond counsel.

Budget Item	Share of Total Budget	Annual Costs
Routine O&M	37%	\$1,350,000
Horticulture Maintenance & Water Maintenance	40%	\$1,460,000
General Administration	7%	\$255,000
Security	13%	\$460,000
Constituency Building	3%	\$116,000
Total Conceptual Annual O&M Budget		\$3,641,000
New Annual Programming & Recreation Costs at Silver Lake Recreation Center		\$236,000

Figure 8-2 Conceptual Park Annual O&M Budget

8.4 O&M Precedent Parks

ECHO PARK, LOS ANGELES, CA

A 29-acre open space in neighboring Echo Park, owned and maintained by RAP. Like SLRC, Echo Park is anchored by a body of water, Echo Park Lake, and is home to wildlife habitats, walking trails, and recreational facilities. For this analysis, Echo Park's Routine O&M costs were used as a precedent to determine a baseline for Routine O&M costs for SLRC. The costs of maintenance of Echo Park Lake were also used to determine Water Management costs at SLRC.



SCISSORTAIL PARK, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

An urban park extending from the downtown core of Oklahoma City, Scissortail Park's first phase comprises 36 acres of gardens and woodlands, a lake, and retail and recreational facilities. Also designed by Hargreaves Jones, Scissortail Park's Routine O&M costs were used as a benchmark for this analysis.



SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDENS, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The Botanical Gardens are home to a 55-acre arboretum and gardens, and are located within Golden Gate Park, adjacent to San Francisco's residential Inner Sunset neighborhood. With a mission that focuses on horticulture and specialized landscaping and an emphasis on passive use, the Gardens' horticulture maintenance costs were used as a precedent for SLRC.



BUFFALO BAYOU PARK, HOUSTON, TX

Buffalo Bayou Park is comprised of 160 acres of parkland surrounding the Buffalo Bayou waterway that runs through several residential neighborhoods to the northwest of Downtown Houston. Its location and context, as well as its management by the non-profit Buffalo Bayou Partnership in collaboration with the City of Houston supported its use as a precedent for SLRC's General Administration costs.



8.5 Routine Maintenance

Routine maintenance activities will occur year-round on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis. Daily activities include cleaning of park spaces such as the Education Center and restrooms, and litter and trash removal. Weekly activities include equipment inspection and scheduling of repairs, while monthly activities will include minor repairs. Annual activities will involve larger capital replacement projects as needed.

8.6 Horticultural Maintenance & Water Management

Three critical variables effect maintenance work: 1) the nature of the task; 2) skill levels required to performing the task; and 3) the physical setting. For example, cleaning a paved surface is different from horticultural work - in the type of equipment needed, the skills needed and in the time duration to perform the work. Quality maintenance is essential to not only protecting long-term capital investments, but to ensure park success and as a reflection of community values.

The goal for park maintenance is to provide the highest quality maintenance to ensure that the park is clean, attractive and usable for visitors. To achieve the highest levels of service for maintenance, successful parks have dedicated resources to oversee maintenance and some repairs, provide skilled horticultural care, and operational support for special events. With the addition of habitat and wildlife at the SLRC, Park maintenance staff will need to be supplemented by specialty management staff or contracted services.

A list of recommended inspection and maintenance activities are outlined below.

HORTICULTURAL MAINTENANCE

The Master Plan design includes several features that have specific maintenance needs including the following: Upland Habitat, Wetland Habitat, Ornamental Gardens, and the Reservoirs. Below are brief description of their maintenance needs or issues.



Figure 8-3 Horticultural Maintenance Examples

Activities include weeding and pruning.

ORNAMENTAL GARDENS

These gardens will be a mix of native and regionally adapted drought tolerant species. Maintenance needs of these gardens are minimal, however, specific steps must be taken to ensure the landscape flourishes and does not look like an untended, weedy, ragged feature. Maintenance needs of ornamental gardens commonly include:

- Deep waterings in times of drought
- Invasive species removal
- Light applications of compost or fertilizer (optional)
- Selective pruning and annual cut back
- Planting replacement as necessary
- Regular removal of litter and other debris

A major task associated with the maintenance of ornamental gardens is invasive species removal. The removal of unwanted species can be performed by either hand pulling or the spot use of herbicides. This task can be time-consuming for park staff regardless of the weed removal method. These areas must be annually inspected by a trained professional to evaluate their health and development.

UPLAND HABITAT

The Knoll and Eucalyptus Grove will be replanted over time to replace and supplement existing Eucalyptus trees with native species. These areas will also be planted with native shrubs and groundcover. Woodlands typically have low maintenance requirements after establishment, however, any newly planted landscape within an urban park will require regular care. Maintenance needs of woodlands commonly include:

- Deep waterings in times of drought (after establishment period)
- Invasive species removal
- Tree pruning to incrementally open and lift canopy
- Periodic pruning of groundcover plantings
- Plant replacement as necessary

Figure 8-4 Example of Ornamental Garden Plants



WETLANDS

Not only will the proposed wetlands provide critical habitat for wildlife, they are being relied upon to help meet water quality goals as outlined in Chapter 06. To sustain their function as water quality treatment wetlands, they must be maintained properly. The maintenance needs of wetland gardens can be rather intensive. Water quality will have to be regularly monitored and maintained to a minimum standard to support wetland plantings and wildlife.

Frequency	Description
Monthly, or More Frequently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for invasive vegetation and schedule removal. • Check the condition and health of the wetland vegetation and identify areas that require special attention. Schedule replanting as needed. • Remove litter and debris from wetlands. • Removed dead plant material. • During initial plant establishment on the floating treatment wetlands, check the health and development of the plants and note any remedial actions needed. • Ensure floating treatment wetlands are properly anchored • Inspect for trash and debris accumulation in wetlands • Check for algal growth, signs of pollution such as oil sheens, discolored water, or unpleasant odors, and signs of flooding.
Semi-Annual or After Significant Storms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform vector control, if necessary. • Repair undercut areas and erosion to banks or slopes. • Inspect wetland structures and identify needed repairs.
Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair and replace wetland structures as necessary.
Once or As Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District. • During initial plant establishment of the floating treatment wetlands, perform any necessary remedial actions, such as replanting bare spots.

Figure 8-5 Recommended Wetland Maintenance Activities.



Figure 8-6 Example of Wetland Maintenance Activities include plant inspection and removal of dead plants

RESERVOIR WATER BODIES

Lake or open water body maintenance can prove to be very intensive and time consuming. LADWP currently uses small boats to routinely inspect structures and maintain the reservoirs. It is anticipated that LADWP will continue to access the reservoirs via boat. Additionally, some of the maintenance required for the proposed wetlands and embankment vegetation will require small boats to perform these tasks. Additional monitoring and maintenance will be required to meet SLRC water quality objectives and support aquatic wildlife. Common and routine maintenance activities include:

- Invasive species removal on vegetated embankments
- Erosion control of vegetated embankments
- Horticultural maintenance (edge plantings, aquatic plantings)
- Floating or submerged debris removal
- Bi-monthly (or after significant storms) water quality sampling and monitoring to ensure water quality goals are being met

Figure 8-7 Example of Wetland Plantings



LADWP MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

LADWP will continue to access and use the site for current and future operational needs. The areas reserved for LADWP use are shown in Figure 8-8 and include an active regulator station, pipes underneath and around the reservoirs, equipment, buildings, dams, spillways, and other facilities. These areas will be fenced to ensure public and employee safety. LADWP will require 24/7 access to the site and usage of the road that circumnavigates the site with a minimum 12 feet of road width. LADWP maintenance activities include:

- Water level as stated in approved environmental documents
- Water quality management prior to the SLRC Master Plan implementation
- Dam and spillway brush clearance and other required maintenance as directed by regulatory agencies
- Aeration and recirculation system as originally intended for reservoir water algae management
- Valves associated with the stormwater capture infrastructure
- Buildings and facilities within areas reserved for LADWP use
- Landscape maintenance of the areas reserved for LADWP use
- Gates and fencing intended to secure LADWP reserved areas

LADWP will not be responsible for any SLRC Master Plan improvements or consequent changes, including maintaining reservoir water quality after the addition of wetland habitats.

Figure 8-8 LADWP Areas of Responsibility

ivanhoe dam

ivanhoe inlet tower

divider dam

spillway

gatewell structure & regulator station

overflow spillway

silver lake outlet tower

silver lake dam

ladwp facilities including caretakers house, gatewell structure, chlorine station, etc.



