
Compromise plan won't bring peace on passive issue

► City officials, activists remain split over proposed activities in Central Park, but voters will ultimately decide land's fate on ballot.

By Morgan K. Sales
Staff Writer

A plan that could resolve the city's lack of youth sports facilities and family recreation spots while retaining a passive character to much of Huntington Central Park will not be the envisioned

dove of peace ending the active-versus-passive war over how the park should evolve.

Council members and residents remain at odds over whether the design for 140 undeveloped acres in the southern section of the park reflects what has

been demanded by residents and what is needed for a city park.

"The usage is far too intensive," Councilman Peter Green said. "Every poll that has been taken has come back showing that people want passive open space in the park. I don't think the will of the people has been followed."

But Councilman Earle Robitaille said the plan does not go far enough in providing recreational activities.

"We never do anything for the kids in Huntington Beach. We have a lot of parks, but we never do anything with them. We need some alternative for the youngsters other than just pointing them toward the beach," he said.

About 70 percent of the area covered by the plan maintains an open space character, while 30 percent of organized recreational uses are located within an

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area which would minimize any impact on both the passive areas and surrounding neighborhoods, according to city staff.

But passive proponents contend that the plan allows to many high intensity uses.

"It needs to go back to the drawing board," resident Ralph Bauer said. "There are several aspects to this plan that are unreasonable, but there are parts that are palatable. Overall the plan ignores the wishes of the citizens and is doomed to fail should it come up for a Measure C vote."

Councilwoman Grace Winchell said although the uses presented in the plan are good, her concern was with the underlying land use designations that could permit higher intensity uses.

Councilman Don MacAllister

said the plan should alleviate fears of bungee cord jumping, go carts, a recreational vehicle park, a skateboard park, a bowling alley and sundry other recreational activities deemed inappropriate for the park by passive park proponents.

"This should put to rest rumors of a resort hotel going up in Central Park," Councilman Don MacAllister said. "It was never our intent to build another Disneyland."

Before the recreation plan can be executed, it must gain the approval of the Community Services Commission, Planning Commission and City Council before facing its biggest hurdle — passing a city's Measure C initiative requiring voter approval for large-scale development on public park land. The Community Services Commission will conduct a public hearing on the plan Wednesday.

Hagan anticipates the proposal will come before council in November and be placed on the June 6, 1993 ballot. Councilwoman Linda Moulton-Patterson voiced apprehension about considering the plan following the November election, since it would not allow new councilmembers ample time to review the proposal before being asked to vote on it.

The biggest lingering question stemming from the plan is how the construction of \$37 million in recreational facilities will be funded. Hagan suggested the city solicit proposals from concessionaires for design, construction and operation of the proposed golf driving range, indoor gun range, batting cages and possible fishing lake. Otherwise, the amenities would have to be built in phases as funds become available.

As outlined in the plan, a sports complex featuring soccer, football and baseball athletic fields would be developed. Other featured recreational amenities include plans for basketball and tennis courts, children's playgrounds, a natatorium and gymnasium.

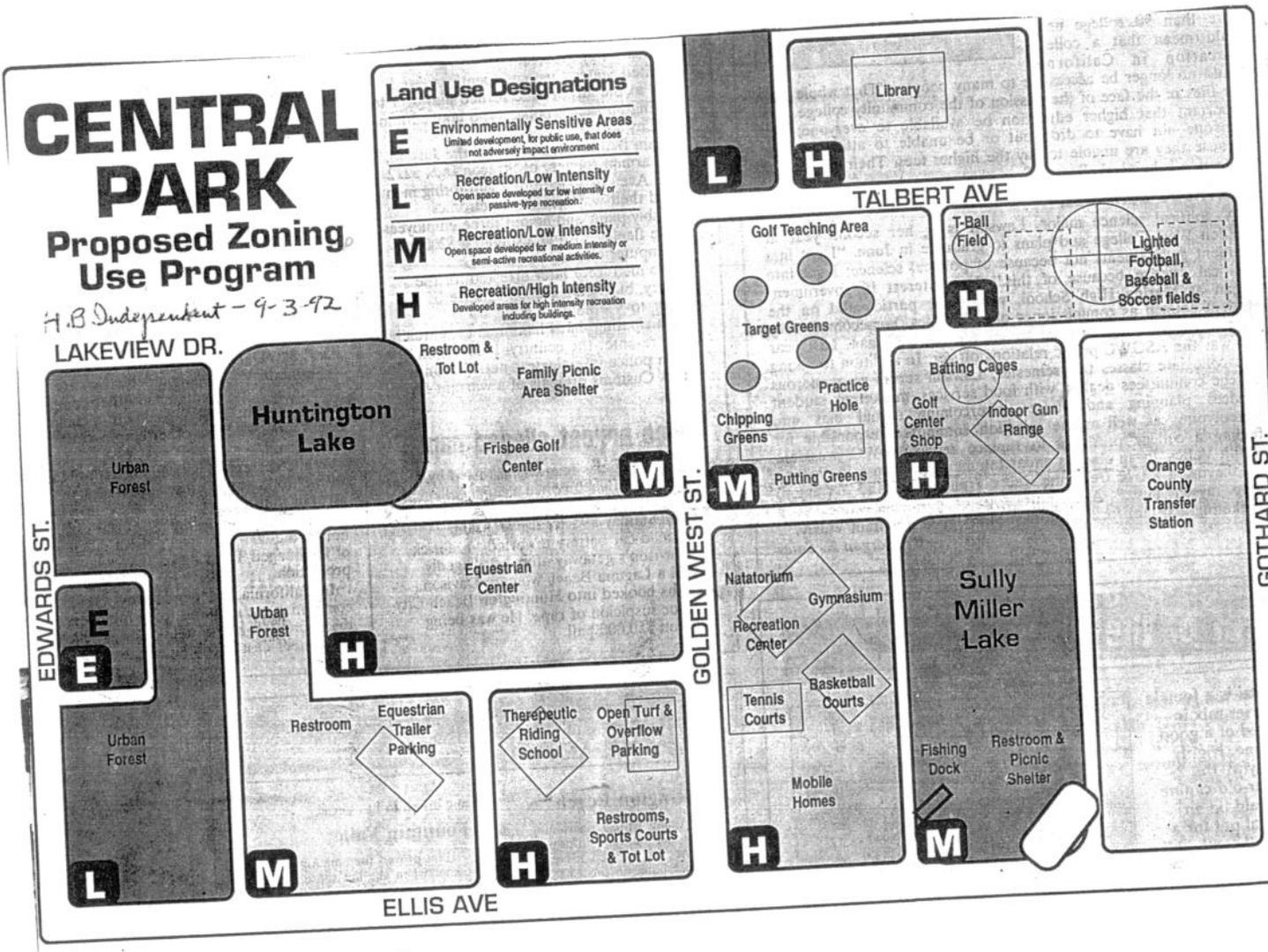
The remainder of the southern section of the park would be primarily open space that would contain picnic areas, vista and lookout points, trails and an urban forest.

CENTRAL PARK

Proposed Zoning Use Program

H.B. Independent - 9-3-92
LAKEVIEW DR.

- ### Land Use Designations
- E** Environmentally Sensitive Areas
Limited development for public use, that does not adversely impact environment
 - L** Recreation/Low Intensity
Open space developed for low intensity or passive-type recreation.
 - M** Recreation/Low Intensity
Open space developed for medium intensity or semi-active recreational activities.
 - H** Recreation/High Intensity
Developed areas for high intensity recreation including buildings.



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For Reference