

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: September 26, 2005

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 21: Consideration of resolution approving an impacted neighborhood parking fee reduction program for Conservancy parks.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution approving an impacted neighborhood parking fee reduction program.

Legislative Authority: Public Resources Code Section 33211.5(c).

Background: Is it too much to hope that by reducing the parking fee at Wilacre Park down to \$1.00 we can put this issue behind us? That is your staff's hope in recommending this change to the parking policy.

On April 4, 2005, after a lengthy discussion, the Advisory Committee and Conservancy unanimously declined to change the current parking fee of \$3.00 at Wilacre Park. However a key Conservancy stakeholder was not able to attend that meeting, so discussions between that stakeholder, staff, and the Studio City community have continued.

Current Proposal: Nobody will be totally happy with what is being proposed. The residents adjacent to Wilacre Park continue to agitate against any fee because park visitors shun the parking lot and use the street in order to avoid the fee. On the other hand, there is a strong public policy argument that visitors should pay a portion of the upkeep of a park facility, especially in affluent communities where paying a modest parking fee does not form an economic impediment to enjoying the park resource.

Between these two poles, the new policy aims to keep some visitor contribution to maintenance (although much reduced) both as a matter of policy and budgetary necessity. However, by setting the fee at \$1.00—less than the cheapest product you can buy at Starbucks—we hope to lure more of the “outside” parkers to avail themselves of the convenience of the Conservancy supplied parking area.

The scope of the proposed policy change affects the Victory Trailhead at Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (formerly Ahmanson Ranch). The need for parking fee revenue at Ahmanson is even greater than at Wilacre (Ahmanson, being in Ventura County, is not

eligible for Prop. A funding), but the issues are potentially the same, *i.e.*, impact on local neighbors as a result of visitors wanting to avoid paying a parking fee. Moreover, while outside the Conservancy's formal purview, you should know that the staff will recommend that the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority similarly reduce the parking fee at Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park (Top-of-Reseda).

While the rationale that applies to Wilacre, Victory Trailhead, and Top-of-Reseda, also applies to Temescal Gateway Park in Pacific Palisades, there are compelling reasons not to give-in and reduce the current \$5.00 parking fee. We have received complaints from the Senior Assisted Living Residence as well as adjacent apartments and condos that on weekends particularly, parking spaces along Sunset Boulevard are being taken up by park visitors. However, Temescal is a full service park, with many amenities, including flush toilets and acres of lawn. The upkeep costs at Temescal virtually dictate that the visitor population contribute significantly to the park. Along Sunset Boulevard and Temescal Canyon Road the city has options to control parking, including installing its own meters, limiting duration, or establishing a permit system for visitors to the Senior Assisted Living Residence.