



ELYSIAN PARK MASTER PLAN

For
City of Los Angeles
Department of Recreation and Parks
Councilmember Eric Garcetti, CD #13
Councilmember Ed Reyes, CD #1

June 2006





ELYSIAN PARK MASTER PLAN

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa

Councilmember Ed P. Reyes
Council District #1

Councilmember Eric Garcetti
Council District #13

DEPARTMENT OF
RECREATION & PARKS

Jon Kirk Mukri, *General Manager*

Prepared by:
Withers & Sandgren, Ltd.

June 2006

DRAFT



MASTER PLAN PARTICIPANTS

CITY OF LOS ANGELES BUREAU OF ENGINEERING

Stephen Davis, *Project Manager*

CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

Mark Mariscal, *Superintendent of Griffith-Metro Region*

Bill Lopez, *Senior Park Maintenance Supervisor*

Peggy Kelly, *Park Maintenance Supervisor*

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Mike Fong and Monica Aleman, *Council District #1*

Glen Duke and Mitch O’Farrell, *Council District #13*

CITIZENS COMMITTEE TO SAVE ELYSIAN PARK (CCSEP)

Pamela Burgess

Scott Fajack

Sallie Neubauer

GREATER ECHO PARK ELYSIAN NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Christine Peters

ELYSIAN VALLEY RIVERSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Steve Zimmer

HISTORIC CULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Alicia Brown

LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Susan Wong

Prepared by:

WITHERS & SANDGREN LTD.

Landscape Architecture & Planning

Lacey Withers, *Principal*

Jan Sandgren, *Principal*

Patty B. Nalle, *Project Manager*

Celesta Pappas, *Graphic Designer*

Prepared with the assistance from the following professionals:

Lynne Dwyer Landscape Architecture

Landscape Architecture & Biology

Verna Jigour Associates

Conservation Ecology & Design Services

Linscott, Law & Greenspan Engineers (LLG)

Transportation Planning

Erik Sandgren

Artist



DRAFT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARK

- 1 Introduction to the Master Plan
- 4 Fun and Recreation in the Park
- 6 Getting Around the Park
- 8 The Parkland
- 10 Taking Care of the Park

FUN AND RECREATION IN THE PARK

- 13 Action plan
- 14 Underutilized Areas
- 18 Dogs in the Park
- 18 Sports Fields
- 18 Elysian Fields
- 19 Picnic Areas
- 20 Adaptive Recreation Center
- 21 Viewpoints
- 22 Trailheads
- 22 Running/Jogging Trail Programs
- 23 Park Programming
- 24 Timeline for Recommendation Implementation

GETTING AROUND THE PARK

- 25 Action Plan
- 26 Roads and Traffic
- 28 Pod Parking
- 31 Trails, Crossings & Stairways
- 34 Signs-Wayfinding, Location Identification & Trail Markers
- 34 Gateways Into the Park
- 36 Timeline for Recommendation Implementation

THE PARKLAND

- 37 Action Plan
- 38 Park Landscapes
- 39 Flora and Fauna, Native Plant Communities and Restoration
- 46 Land Outside Elysian Park
- 47 Connecting Park Lands
- 48 Timeline for Recommendation Implementation

TAKING CARE OF THE PARK

- 49 Action Plan
- 50 Maintaining the Park
- 52 Saving Places with History
- 54 Setting Design Standards
- 58 Timeline for Recommendation Implementation



TABLE OF CONTENTS, *cont.*

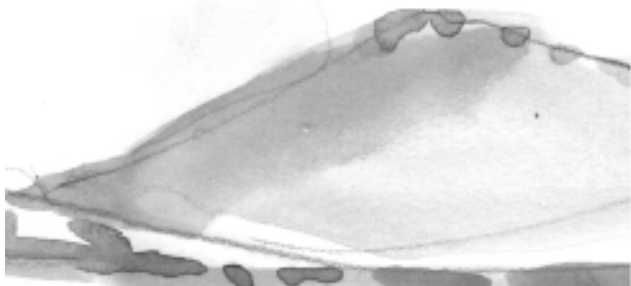
APPENDICES

Bibliography

A. Natural Resources of Elysian Park

FIGURES & ILLUSTRATIONS

5 Fig. 0-1, Existing Recreation Facilities
7 Fig. 0-2, Existing Circulation
9 Fig. 0-3, Existing Vegetation & Overlooks
11 Fig. 0-4, Existing Points of Interest
15 Fig. 1-1, Angels Point Picnic Area Improvement Plan
16 Fig. 1-2, Radio Hill Improvements
19 Fig. 1-3, Parking, Picnic & Trail Improvements at Elysian Fields
23 Fig. 1-4, Trailhead Amenities
26 Fig. 2-1, Pedestrian Access on Stadium Way
27 Fig. 2-2, Stadium Way Lane Reconfiguration Diagram
27 Fig. 2-3, Stadium Way Improvements
28 Fig. 2-4, Park Drive Improvements
29 Fig. 2-5, Pod Parking
30 Fig. 2-6, Pod Parking & Facilities Parking
32 Fig. 2-7, Trail Connection Over Academy Road
33 Fig. 2-8, Proposed Trail System
35 Fig. 2-9, Park Gateways & Entrances
45 Fig. 3-1, Restoration Priorities
47 Fig. 3-2, Los Angeles River Regional Open Space
53 Fig. 4-1, Protection for the Avenue of the Palms
54 Fig. 4-2, Victory Memorial Improvements
55 Fig. 4-3, Entry & Trail Markers
55 Fig. 4-4, Location Signs
57 Fig. 4-5, Street Tree Plan



INTRODUCTION TO THE PARK





INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER PLAN

Elysian Park is a vibrant, living remnant of our City's historic fabric. When the Portola expedition arrived at the future site of the Pueblo de Los Angeles in 1769, they camped at the foot of Buena Vista Hill near Broadway in what is now Elysian Park. The original Spanish land grant from King Carlos of Spain to the Pueblo included part of the Park.

As Los Angeles has matured into the multi-cultural megalopolis it is today, Elysian Park, the city's oldest Park, has quietly persisted as a refuge where a crowded populous can experience nature within an urban environment.

Today, the significance of the Park's 604 green acres is greater than ever. Los Angeles has the lowest number of open space acres per resident compared to any other major American city. Conserving and enhancing City parks and open space is critical to providing an improved quality of life for millions. The urban trails, inspirational overlooks, picnic spots and green recreation areas provide an oasis for both downtown residents and the numerous neighborhoods surrounding Elysian Park.

In 1886 Elysian Park rode the wave of the American desire to maintain open space and officially became a park. Today, in the year 2005, the Park is still in the middle of the collision between nature and urbanization. The decisions made now will impact the citizens of Los Angeles for generations to come.





THE MASTER PLAN FOR ELYSIAN PARK

This Master Plan is a working list of action items that were determined by the community and the City as critical to the on-going improvement of the Park and to the citizens of greater Los Angeles who use and enjoy the Park. The decision to develop a new master plan grew out of the desire of local citizens to preserve and protect this great resource called Elysian Park.

This document became a reality through the generous commitment of local elected officials and the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. Extensive input from the public in three community meetings has been recorded and folded into the plan.

Previously written articles and documents have extensively detailed the history of Elysian Park and documented patterns of Park utilization. The previous Master Plan for Elysian Park was completed in 1971. Plant ecologies have changed since then; traffic has grown; and there is a greater need than ever before for recreation. The ever present question is “Where is the Park going?”

This Master Plan draws on historic information to form a list of recommendations to improve existing conditions in the Park and to solve persistent prob-

lems that continue to deter Park use. These recommendations in the form of action items serve to ‘re-weave’ the fabric of Elysian Park; to strengthen the pieces in order to revitalize the whole.

Not one area is perceived as its own place in Elysian Park. All areas are connected by the communities, the network of trails, the precious natural areas, and the active and passive recreational uses set among them. Therefore the Park is not planned by area but by theme. After the preface that briefly outlines the existing conditions of the Park, there are four chapters to this Master Plan. These are:

- **FUN AND RECREATION IN THE PARK**
- **GETTING AROUND THE PARK**
- **THE PARKLAND**
- **TAKING CARE OF THE PARK**

New park and open space development in Los Angeles is occurring all around Elysian Park. In addition, future City plans of new community developments are positive opportunities to connect into the resources of Elysian Park. Revitalization of Elysian Park is a key component in the city’s strategy to create and maintain a desirable quality of life in Los Angeles.



*STUNNING VIEWS OF THE SURROUNDING
URBAN LANDSCAPE ARE AVAILABLE AT
EVERY TURN WITHIN THE PARK.*



FUN AND RECREATION IN THE PARK

Discovering the many facilities offered at Elysian Park is a worthwhile process. Although picnicking is the popular Park activity in sunny Los Angeles, dozens of extraordinary recreational opportunities are available for public use.

Elysian Fields

- Baseball fields (2)
- Play structures (2)
- Restrooms (2)
- Group picnic areas
- Individual picnic areas

Solano Canyon

- Practice ball field
- Tennis courts (2)
- Play structures (2)
- Restroom
- Group picnic area*
- Individual picnic areas

Leo Politi Picnic Area*

- Practice ball field
- Tennis court
- Volleyball court
- Group picnic area

Chavez Ravine Arboretum

- Play structures (2)
- Restrooms (2)
- Horseshoe Pit
- Group picnic area
- Individual picnic areas

Grace E. Simons Lodge*

- Community room
- Restroom, interior & exterior
- Group picnic area

Buena Vista Meadow

- Volleyball courts (2)
- Play structure (closed)
- Port-a-potties
- Individual picnic areas

Adaptive Recreation Center

- Basketball court
- Play structure
- Restroom, interior
- Group picnic area
- Individual picnic areas

Angels Point

- Individual picnic areas
- Play structure

Casanova Terrace

- Individual picnic areas
- Play structure (Tot)

*Fee Reservation



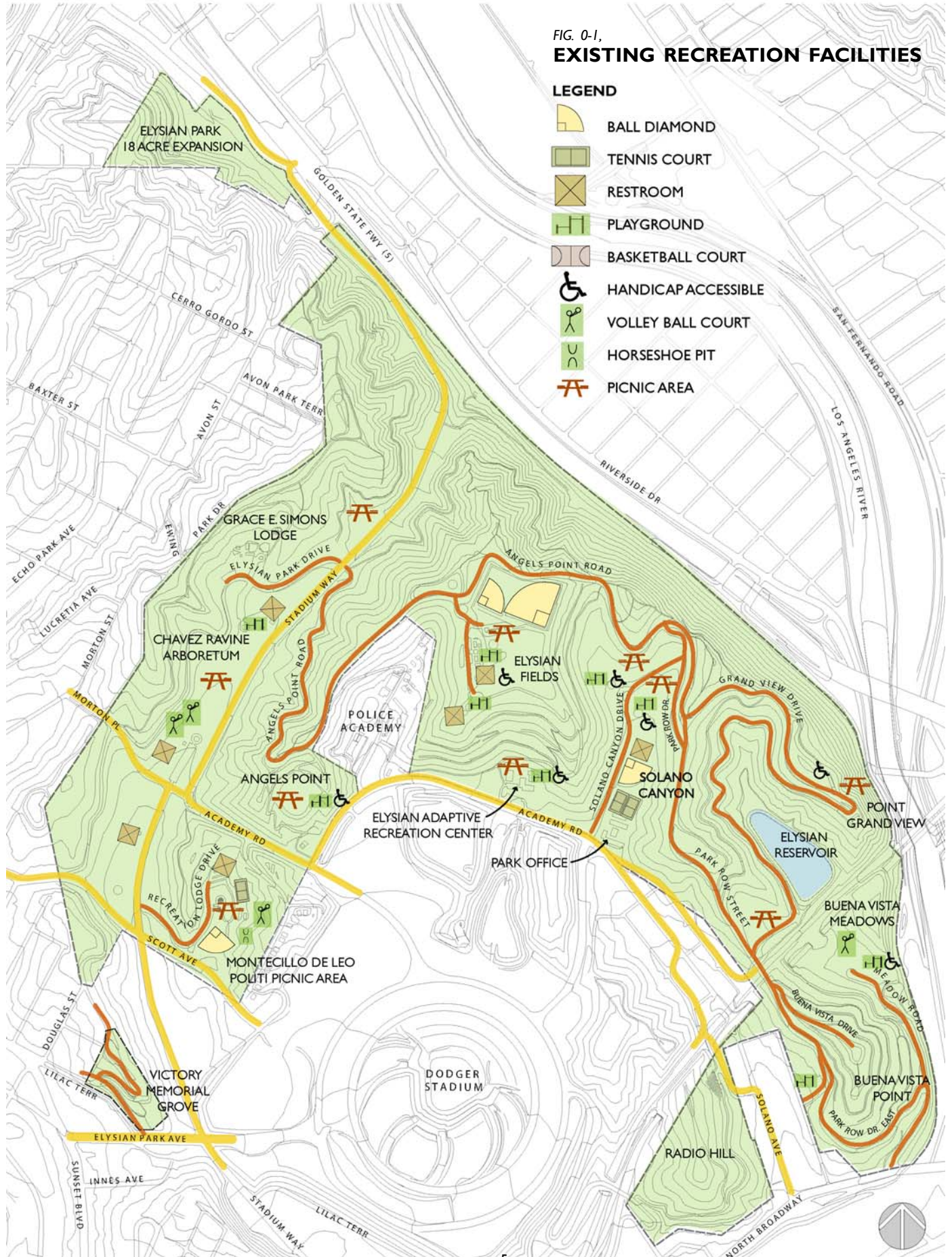
TOP, NEW ACCESSIBLE PLAY STRUCTURES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN INSTALLED IN CHAVEZ RAVINE ARBORETUM.

MIDDLE, REMOTE CONTROL GLIDERS SOAR ON THE UPDRAFTS OF THE BISHOPS CANYON LANDFILL RESTORATION AREA.

BOTTOM, AN EVENING PRACTICE GAME IN SOLANO CANYON.



FIG. 0-1, EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES





GETTING AROUND THE PARK

The roadways within Elysian Park have two distinct visual personalities. The first is comprised of the wide arterial streets and highway that bisect the Park; the second is the more intimate neighborhood and park roads.

Major Roadways

- Stadium Way
- Academy Road
- Elysian Park Avenue

City Streets

- Scott Avenue
- Morton Place
- Lilac Terrace

Adjacent City Streets

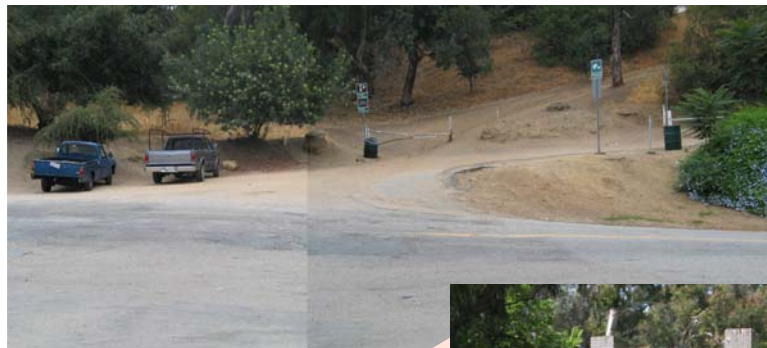
- Park Drive
- Lilac Terrace
- Boylston Street
- Solano Avenue
- Amador Street
- Casanova Street
- North Broadway

Park Drives

- Elysian Park Drive (*closed to traffic at Grace E. Simons Lodge*)
- Angels Point Road
- Recreation Lodge Drive
- Solano Canyon Drive
- Grand View Drive
- Park Row Drive
- Park Row Street
- Park Row Drive East
- Buena Vista Drive
- Meadow Road

Park Entrances

- Fremont Gate at North Broadway
- Riverside Drive at Golden State Freeway, Stadium Way exit
- Morton Place
- Scott Avenue
- Solano Canyon Drive
- Elysian Park Drive at Lilac Terrace
- Stadium Way at Scott Avenue
- Lilac Terrace at Victory Memorial Grove



TOP: THE AWKWARD INTERSECTION OF STADIUM WAY AND ACADEMY ROAD.

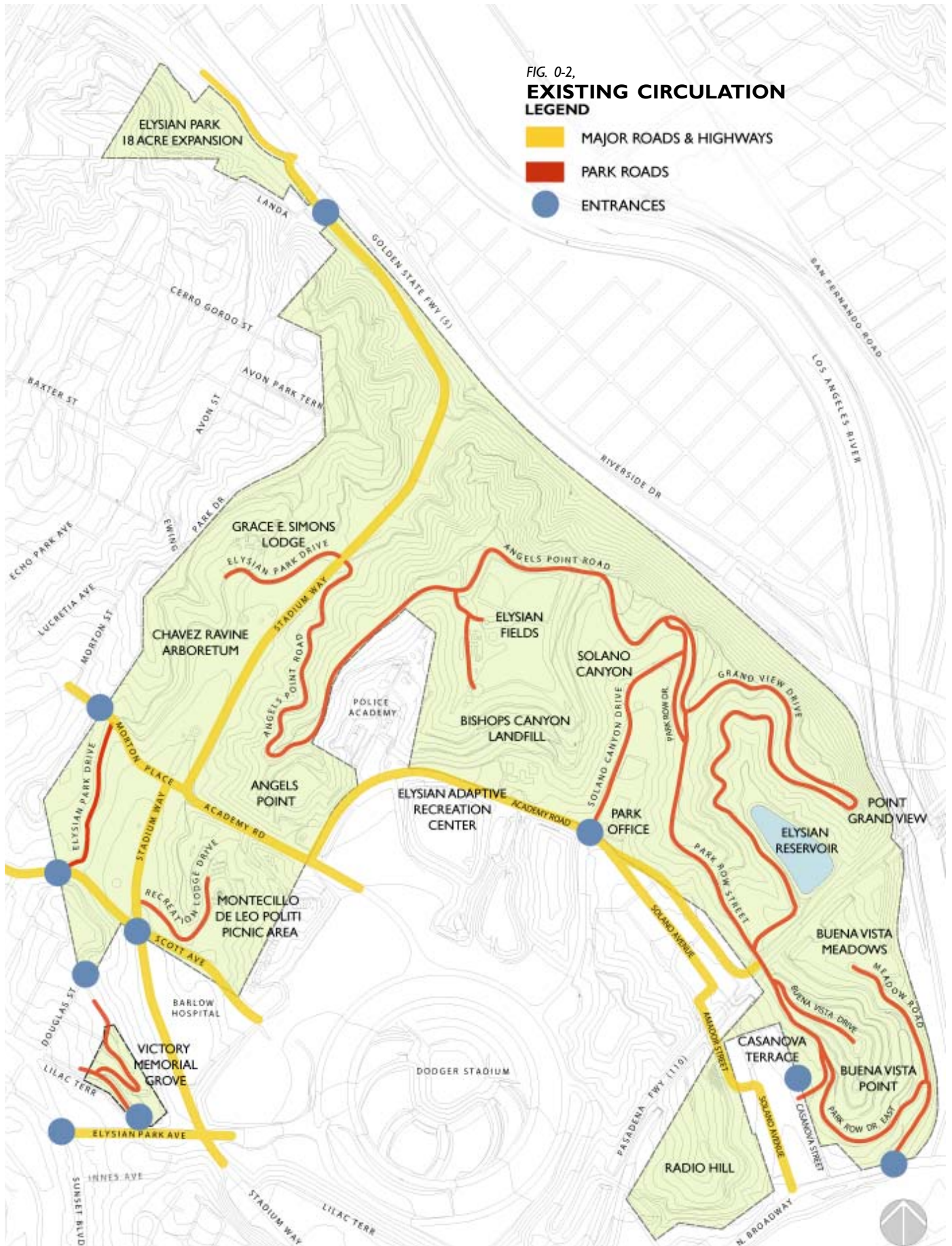
ABOVE: ELYSIAN PARK DRIVE TRAILHEAD ON MORTON STREET.

RIGHT: A MAP OF THE PARK IN CHAVEZ RAVINE ARBORETUM.



FIG. 0-2,
**EXISTING CIRCULATION
LEGEND**

-  MAJOR ROADS & HIGHWAYS
-  PARK ROADS
-  ENTRANCES





THE PARKLAND

“In 1982 the state legislature extended the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Zone to include the Park as its eastern extremity. This beautiful region ... and magnificent vistas is a vital open space for the people of Los Angeles.”

—from *Elysian Park History and Current Issues*, May 1990.

Overlooks

- Grand View Point
- Buena Vista Overlook
- Angels Point
- Bishops Canyon Landfill

Landfills

- Bishops Canyon (closed 1972)
- Angels Point

Native Plant Communities

- Walnut Woodland
- Oak Woodland
- Coastal Sage Scrub

Non-Native Tree Plantings

- Eucalyptus
- Deodar Cedars
- Canary Island Pines
- Wild Date Palms
- Carob
- Fig

Invasive Pest Plants

The “Dirty Dozen”

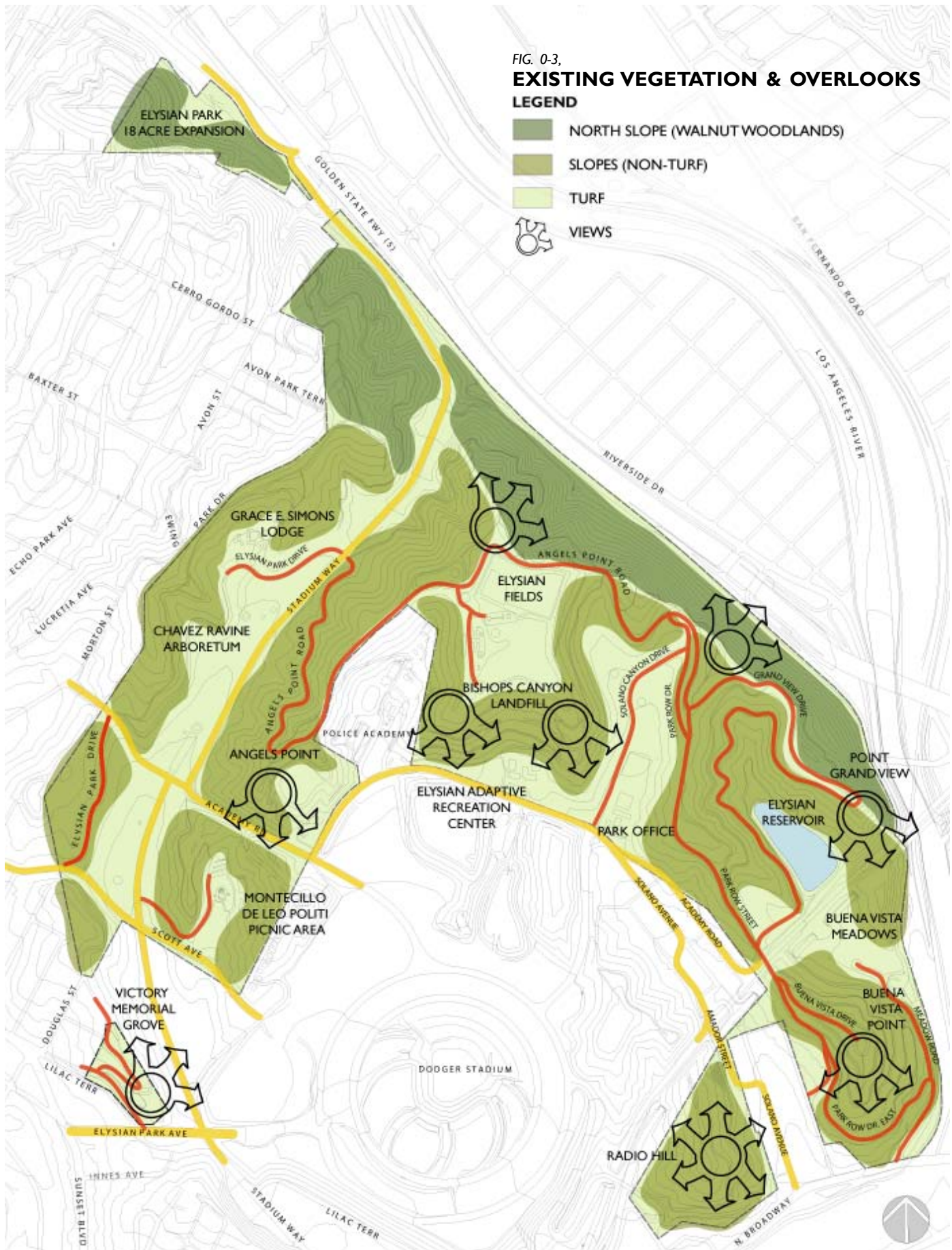
- Ailanthus altissima* / Tree of Heaven
- Tamarix romosissima* / Salt Cedar
- Schinus polygamus* / Peruvian Pepper
- Acacia longifolia* / Sydney Golden Wattle
- Toxicodendron diversilobum* / Poison Oak
- Salsola iberica* / Russian Thistle
- Brassica spp.* / Wild Mustards
- Pennisetum setaceum* / Fountain Grass
- Nicotiana glauca* / Tree Tobacco
- Ricinus communis* / Castor Bean
- Conyza bonariensis* / Hairy Fleabane
- Chenopodium berlandieri* / Netseed Lambsquarters



TOP: RADIO HILL LOOKING SOUTHEAST TO DOWNTOWN.

ABOVE: INVASIVE WILD MUSTARD ON THE NORTH SLOPE.

RIGHT: HEALTHY STAND OF EUCALYPTUS ON A RIDGELINE.





TAKING CARE OF THE PARK

“Elysian Park is the city’s first and oldest Park. It is also one of the last unbuilt parcels in central Los Angeles. The initial 550 acres were “...forever dedicated to the public...” in 1886.”

—from *Elysian Park History and Current Issues*, May 1990.)

Facilities

- Chavez Ravine Arboretum
- Avenue of the Palms
- Ficus Grove
- Palm Hill
- Children’s Garden
- Grace E. Simons Lodge
- Elysian Adaptive Recreation Center
- Elysian Park Office
- Solano Community Garden
- Montecillo De Leo Politi Picnic Area

Memorials & Markers

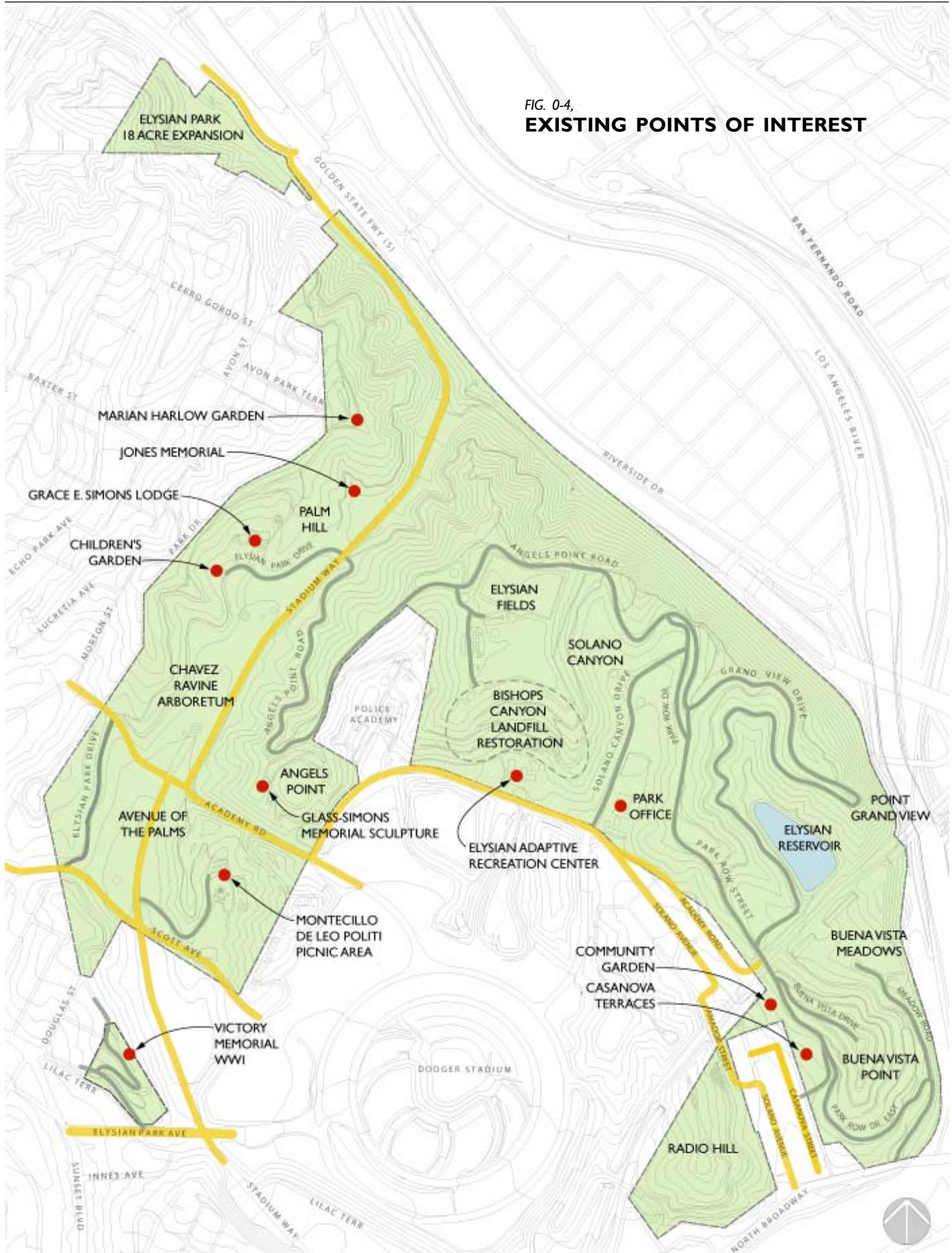
- Jones Memorial
- Victory Memorial (WWI)
- Frank Glass / Grace E. Simons Memorial Sculpture
- Portola Trail Historical Marker
- Marian Harlow Garden



FROM THE TOP:
 THE RETAINING WALLS AT CASANOVA TERRACE
 FRANK GLASS / GRACE E. SIMONS MEMORIAL SCULPTURE
 PLANT SIGNAGE IN THE CHILDREN’S ARBORETUM
 GRACE E. SIMONS LODGE
 VICTORY MEMORIAL
 MOSAIC LIZARD AT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN



FIG. 0-4,
EXISTING POINTS OF INTEREST





DRAFT