SILVER LAKE RESERVOIR COMPLEX MASTER PLAN

MASTER PLAN

DESIGN SUMMARY

OVERVIEW
Master Plan Overview

From its beginnings as a marshy pond within the natural hydrological system of Ivanhoe Canyon to its transformation into an iconic, man-made urban water body, the evolutionary trajectory of the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex (SLRC) has been that of infrastructure. Building upon this narrative, the Master Plan design envisions the new Park as a hybrid infrastructure that blends urban wilderness with human uses, where traces of its history are made visible in the contemporary expressions of the community’s aspirations.

The Master Plan proposes to introduce freshwater wetlands and aquatic habitat for the first time in over 100 years, an ecology that was slowly erased to meet the needs of a growing Los Angeles, and restore remnant woodland habitat from the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Woven within these bold environmental ambitions are places for the community to connect with nature and one another.

The Master Plan design was developed in concert with a robust, year-long community process that included five large community workshops and eight focused meetings with its Stakeholder Working Group.
KEY THEMES
The following Key Themes, or goals, were established through the extensive community engagement process and guided the development of the Master Plan.

**Enjoying Nature**
The park should be a place to sit by the water, walk through a woodland or wetland, and observe wildlife.

**Wellness**
The park should be a place to walk and run, but also offer spaces to sit, relax, and find peace.

**Community**
The park should be a place where the neighborhood comes together for shared experiences.

**Family-Friendly**
The park should create spaces for children to play and learn about their environment.

**Education**
The park should have an education center offering a range of classes and nature-based programs.

**Water Access**
The park should offer opportunities to be at and on the water.
Park Zones

The proposed Master Plan design consists of a series of seven overall park zones stitched together by a tree-lined Promenade. The zones include:

- The Meadow
- The Knoll
- The Ivanhoe Overlook
- The Eucalyptus Grove
- The East and West Narrows
- The South Valley
The Meadow

The Meadow is currently the community heart of the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex. The Master Plan proposes to reconfigure and expand the Meadow’s existing open lawn and shade trees. To enhance the unique views of the reservoirs and vary the experiences for people to interact with the water’s edge, several elevation changes are incorporated in the new design.

A large, gently sloping lawn, Silver Lake Lawn, extends out from Silver Lake Boulevard and down approximately nine feet in elevation to the water’s edge, providing unobstructed, panoramic views out to the water. Terminating at a series of small walkways interwoven within wetland terraces, visitors are offered an immersive experience of the Park’s new wetland ecologies. Floating wetland islands are located offshore, supplementing the wetland terraces with protected habitat for waterfowl.

Along Silver Lake Boulevard, a wide, tree-lined Promenade connects to Ornamental Gardens, welcoming visitors into the Meadow with spaces for strolling and sitting. The Gardens will be a mix of native and regionally adapted, water wise (or drought tolerant) plants with an emphasis on pollinator species. Within the gardens are a series of depressions, or dells, which will function as rain gardens during winter months. Adjacent to the Gardens is an expansive Picnic Grove and informal play walk lined with interpretative, integrative elements such as berms and depressions that offer passive spaces for gathering and play.

A second flat, Great Lawn is set 5 feet below the Picnic Grove. This elevation change creates another unique experiential relationship to the reservoir, occupying a liminal zone between the top of the embankment and the water. Generous terraces with shade trees navigate the remaining elevation change between this lawn and the water’s edge, providing ample, shaded seating with panoramic views of the open reservoir. These intersect with habitat terraces to the south and a small footpath leading to an observation platform. The design intent is to balance the cut and fill earthworks to execute these elements such that no off-haul or import of soil is required. See The Meadow Detailed Plan for a design plan of The Meadow.

Although the Meadow area is shown to be within a DSOD restricted zone, this designation is out of date and proposed improvements will not require additional review and approval.
The Meadow Detailed Plan

SLVER LAKE RESERVOIR
water el. 445’ to 447’

MASTER PLAN DESIGN SUMMARY

walkways through wetland habitat terraces

seating terraces

floating wetland islands

observational platform

silver lake lawn

great lawn

promenade

shade trees in lawn

ornamental gardens

garden dells

picnic grove

shade trees in lawn

informal play walk

overlook plaza

SLVER LAKE BLVD

earl st
view A  Right inside the park at Silver Lake Boulevard, a gently sloping lawn with shade trees opens up views to Silver Lake Reservoir and brings visitors down to the water’s edge. Sheltered between The Knoll and a grove of trees, silver lake lawn is a perfect place for relaxing, finding peace, and enjoying nature.

view B  An informal play walk featuring berms to climb and hang out on meanders between the Picnic Grove and Ornamental Gardens planted with a mix of natives and species adapted to southern California’s climate. The Ornamental Gardens feature plants for pollinators including migratory butterflies.
**view C** An small entry plaza near the intersection of Silver Lake Boulevard and Earl Street doubles as an overlook onto the Great Lawn and wetland terraces and islands. This shaded area of prospect offers a place for quiet reflection or meeting neighbors for a walk through the park’s miles of paths and trails.

**view D** The end of the sloped lawn gives way to a series of seating platforms perched above wetland terraces and islands. Small footpaths into the wetlands provide moments of immersion to learn about wetland plant communities, amphibians, and the other small aquatic wildlife they support.
The Knoll
The Knoll is a large hill within the Complex and is comprised of 8.3 acres of woodland. The Master Plan proposes to enhance its upland, wooded character by proposing a replanting strategy, implemented over time, to increase species diversity and improve its overall habitat value.

With an elevation change of 45’, The Knoll offers expansive views over the reservoirs. Universally accessible nature trails lead up its slopes from the Meadow and Armstrong Ave to a promontory with small shade pavilion and seating area that offers a peaceful place to rest and enjoy the views. Additionally, this area can be used for educational purposes to host small groups of students. To protect wildlife and keep people out of sensitive areas, habitat fences are provided along all the nature trails. All sensitive habitat areas will be closed at night.

A small portion of The Knoll on its southern face is regraded to heighten its form and accommodate small seating terraces facing the Meadow. The Promenade wraps around its base, connecting the Meadow to the proposed Education Center along its western edge. The Environmental Education Center is tucked into The Knoll landscape overlooking the reservoir. The Center is connected directly to the reservoir via a universally accessible pathway that leads down to floating dock which allows hands-on education and the possibility for guided kayak or canoe tours by ecologists. See The Knoll Detailed Plan for a design plan of The Knoll.

The design intent is to balance the cut and fill earthworks such that execution of these elements requires no off-haul or import of soil.
At the top of the Knoll, a small promontory under a shade pavilion creates a moment to pause and enjoy expansive views of the reservoir and park through a restored southern California native woodland and across the sloped lawn to habitat islands. Here, the interwoven ecological and cultural systems of the park are understood. The pavilion will double as an outdoor classroom associated with the Education Center which includes a small roof terrace observation platform.
**Ivanhoe Overlook**

As a smaller and somewhat isolated water body, Ivanhoe Reservoir presents the opportunity to become a Living Laboratory – a testing ground for establishing new wetland habitat in the Complex and understanding the effectiveness of constructed wetland terraces and islands on water quality and aquatic habitat.

The design of Ivanhoe Overlook takes advantage of open views to the south of the Ivanhoe Reservoir with an observation deck extending out over wetland terraces which step down to the water. Small footpaths through these terraces lead to observational platforms that can be used for on-going monitoring and testing to inform how habitat is managed throughout the Complex. Complimenting the wetland terraces are two floating wetland islands.

A small shade pavilion with integrated seating provides a sheltered space for outdoor education or community gathering. Interpretive signage educates visitors about the operations of the Living Laboratory and its ecologies. See Ivanhoe Overlook Detailed Plan for a design plan of this area.

An existing Inlet Tower located on Ivanhoe Dam will remain in place and operational. Construction within the Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) boundary will require additional review and approval.
**view A** A small boardwalk brings research and academic collaborators and students through and into wetland terraces where plant community and aquatic species establishment as well as water quality can be monitored and studied.

**view B** A wood decked platform at the northwest edge of Ivanhoe features a shade pavilion and integrated seating which functions as gathering space and outdoor classroom. Interpretative signs will provide information about wildlife and updates on research and monitoring activities, keeping the community connected to the park’s ecosystem function and management.
The Eucalyptus Grove

The Eucalyptus Grove is currently a wooded area predominantly planted with Eucalyptus trees of varying age and health. The Master Plan proposes to replant this zone over time to enhance and restore its upland habitat value. All walkways throughout the Eucalyptus Grove will include low habitat fencing to protect sensitive habitat areas.

At the edge of Eucalyptus Grove, habitat terraces stretch out beyond the existing embankment edge creating a gradient of upland, transition and wetland ecologies. A large overlook extends out over these terraces, offering a unique perspective to observe the new wetland habitat and becomes a prime place for birdwatching. At the overlook, interpretive and educational signage will be included. Floating islands are added adjacent to the Eucalyptus Grove to further enhance this area’s biodiversity and provide protected habitat for foraging and nesting. The Eucalyptus Grove Detailed Plan provides a design plan of these features and elements.

The design intent of this area is to balance a portion of cut and fill to create the habitat terraces, supplemented by pile supported landscape structures. Within the DSOD area, fill may be required to build the habitat terraces.
view A The Promenade narrows where it crosses into the Eucalyptus Grove to minimize its footprint. The walkway is edged with habitat fences to protect wildlife and the restored native woodland plant community. It connects to an overlook beyond.

view B At the overlook, both wetland terraces and islands can be observed providing a superb location to learn about their habitat value and water quality function as well as the migratory waterfowl they support. This overlook is also equipped with free telescopes for bird watching and classes.
The East and West Narrows

The East and West Narrows are the narrowest sections of the site and run along the south edges of the Silver Lake Reservoir embankment. The primary feature of these linear corridors is the Promenade which includes overlooks and terraces at strategic locations to maximize views out and across the reservoir or to habitat islands.

On the East Narrows (Views A and C) along Silver Lake Boulevard a varying 3- to 4-foot grade separation from the road to the top of the embankment allows for a continuous seat wall to be added to the Promenade. There are also low, historic concrete walls along these road edges which will be recognized and incorporated into the Promenade design. Where the Promenade widens along the East Narrows, a fitness circuit is proposed, creating a connection to the Recreation Center. To amplify views across Silver Lake Reservoir to the San Gabriel Mountains, an elevated bridge swings out over the water and above a habitat island.

The West Narrows (View B) include seating terraces embedded into the embankment to provide seating for people to get to the water’s edge and enjoy the expansive reservoir views. An allée of trees along the Promenade provides much needed shade and shelter.

view A Where the land between the reservoir and Silver Lake Boulevard widens, the Promenade incorporates a fitness circuit which is a connection to and extension of the Recreation Center in the South Valley. Small seating terraces step down the embankment slope creating a perfect perch for taking in amazing views and spectacular sunsets.
**view B** Stepped seating with coastal scrub gardens along the Promenade at West Silver Lake Boulevard offer sweeping views across the reservoir to the Knoll and Meadow.

**view C** An overlook bridge projects visitors out over the reservoir, offering views north across the water to the San Gabriel Mountains. With integrated seat walls and equipped with free telescopes, the overlook offers a great location for bird watching classes as well as observing seasonal migratory patterns.
The South Valley: The Silver Lake Recreation Center

Anchored on the corner of Van Pelt Place and Silver Lake Boulevard, a new Multi-Purpose Building / Community Center, which will house one indoor basketball court, creates a welcoming entrance to the Recreation and Parks area. An outdoor plaza with shade trees and both integrated and movable seating, connects the existing Recreation Center and playground to the new facility. To accommodate this new building, the existing basketball court and playfield are relocated to the north of the Multi-Purpose Facility. The existing picnic area is relocated to the west sloping lawn and additional trees are incorporated to provide shade.

The dog play area is expanded and renovated to include two separate spaces for both small and large dogs. The area is re-graded, and materials are updated from decomposed granite to synthetic turf – a more durable surface to accommodate the high use of these spaces. Integrated seating, benches and shade structures allow dog owners a place to sit and relax while their dogs play. See The South Valley Detailed Plan for a design plan of this area.

Minor reconfiguration improvements to the Recreation Center will be included to provide additional office and storage space. Both the new facility and proposed modifications to the existing Recreation Center are discussed further in the next section: Buildings & Structures.
THE SOUTH DAM

new play field
new large dog play
new small dog play
new multi-purpose facility
new multi-purpose facility

existing silver lake recreation center
existing playground
new play field
new basketball court
picnic grove

**aerial** This bird’s-eye view shows the new Multi-Purpose Facility which anchors the southeast corner of the Recreation Center and reconfigured recreation field and basketball court.

**view A** The existing dog parks for large and small dogs are expanded and receive a major upgrade which includes durable artificial turf with play hills as well as new seating and shade trees and structures.