The Center for Law in the Public Interest is proud to publish this digital edition of the General Plan for El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park. The General Plan for El Pueblo was originally adopted in 1980 as a joint project by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the City of Los Angeles, and the County of Los Angeles. The State withdrew from the project in 1990. The promise of El Pueblo remains largely unfulfilled. The Center presents this edition of the Plan to guide the collective vision for a comprehensive and coherent web of parks, playgrounds, schools, beaches, and transportation that serves the needs of diverse users and reflects the cultural urban landscape. We hope this Plan sparks a renewed interest in making El Pueblo a world class historic park that revives the forgotten history of Los Angeles, and commemorates the struggles, hopes and triumphs of the natives, settlers, and immigrants who shaped Los Angeles.

Robert García  
Executive Director  
February 2, 2004
Resolution 19–80
Resolution adopted by the
CALIFORNIA PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
at its regular meeting in Santa Ana, California
April 11, 1980

WHEREAS, the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation has presented to this Commission for approval the proposed General Plan for El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park; and

WHEREAS, this reflects the long-range development plan as to provide for the optimum use and enjoyment of the unit as well as the protection of its quality; and

WHEREAS, eleven items of concern have been presented by the Commission to be included in the General Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the State Park and Recreation Commission approves the Department of Parks and Recreation's General Plan for El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, preliminary dated February 1980, and such environmental changes as the Director of Parks and Recreation shall determine advisable and necessary to implement carrying out the provisions and objectives of said plan.
Eleven items of concern to be included in the El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park General Plan adopted in Resolution 19-80 are as follows:

1. That El Pueblo managers and staff be sensitive to the Hispanic cultural background which has made Olvera Street the major attraction it has been for 48 years.

2. That the merchants of Olvera Street shall be identified as a human cultural resource of El Pueblo.

3. Pages 119 and 120 to be rewritten to be in compliance with State law.

4. That new development and commercial development does not overshadow the merchants of Olvera Street.

5. Commission support be given to the closure of Main Street.

6. That the Commission is concerned for the safety of pedestrian crossing at Macy Street.

7. That the resource element be updated with the reference with the new materials which have been presented.

8. That the title page reflect the joint powers involved.

9. That references to "park" be made "park" rather than a "unit".

10. That Commission support is given to allocating resources needed to implement the plan.

11. That the Commission be kept informed of the position of the County and be available to hold public hearings on this issue.
EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES
STATE HISTORIC PARK
General Plan
Preliminary

August 1981

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SUMMARY

El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park has been established, operated, and maintained as a memorial to the history and tradition of California life. It attracts many visitors, and also provides a civic space serving the people of Los Angeles.

This general plan recognizes El Pueblo as a place of enormous potential. As a state historic park, it is in need of development. Not only do its historic buildings need restoration and structural stabilization; the entire site must be made identifiable as a historic park, and its developments must illustrate the story of Los Angeles in a manner that can be readily understood.

The story of the evolution of Los Angeles moves from its founding, with adobes around a characteristic Spanish plaza, through agrarian eras, to a cosmopolitan period of ethnic diversity and civic functions. The authentic presentation of the pueblo's historic buildings will make visible this flow of history. It will be transmitted as well through exhibits and museums; through interpretive guidebooks, maps, and visitor materials; through signs and site amenities; through events, activities, and demonstrations; and through shops, stands, restaurants, and offices that reflect the various ethnic groups and themes of history.

This general plan is an unusual one for the State Park System. The City of Los Angeles is the authorized park administrator. The park includes properties of combined ownership by the State, City, and County of Los Angeles. In addition, much of the park's development, Olvera Street in particular, preceded the State Historic Park and this plan. Therefore, in addition to the preferred developments and land uses, this document addresses two special issues: future intergovernmental relations, and protection of the merchants of Olvera Street.

The general plan makes recommendations for use of the land and development of the site, as have a number of preceding plans. However, the supporting sections -- the concept, inventory of resources, resource management policies, development and restoration guidelines, historical interpretive methods and media, operations and funding -- provide the essential guidelines that will make this development possible, and will transform El Pueblo into a truly comprehensible state historic park.

The general plan recognizes five concerns that will affect development of the site, structures, exhibits, and activities. These are:

1. **Image of the Historic Park**

   The site of El Pueblo as a whole should be immediately recognizable as a place of historic significance, identifiable by its site development, its authentic building treatments, and its social flavor. Its four principal entrances should be clearly identified, and each point of visitor access should have orientation panels, with maps and information. The scale of buildings and streets should recall the pre-automobile era; the site should be organized as a pedestrian park oasis, with vehicles and support facilities at the periphery.
The pueblo is intended to portray the evolution of Los Angeles—from the adobes of the early times to the cosmopolitan period of growth and change.

Olvera Street should be maintained with its Mexican businesses, preserving the market flavor and Mexican atmosphere of the street. Craft demonstrations should be encouraged. Additional visitor orientation and interpretive exhibits should also be provided. The images portrayed in all areas should reflect the historical significance of the buildings and people who occupied this site.

2. **Interpretation of History**

The approach to interpretation of El Pueblo is to provide a blend of concession and exhibit facilities in every site area; to integrate, rather than segregate, the telling of the historic tale. In each cluster of buildings on the site, there should be a core of permanent exhibit and museum space, with adaptive uses in restored buildings nearby. Priority will be given to original historic uses, and significance to the primary period and themes.

A visitor center will be developed. Additional orientation facilities, exhibits, house museums, window museums, walking tours, signage, and print materials will illustrate the various themes and ethnic groups of Los Angeles history established for the park.

3. **Urban Design Features**

The El Pueblo Plaza will continue to serve the city as an "outdoor living room" for concerts, speeches, and other events. It can also serve as a "front door," linked to visitor arrivals from Union Station.

Improvements are necessary to the outdoor areas (the Plaza, the Placita, etc.), to allow them to better serve the present and projected activities at El Pueblo. The overall site redesign, centered on the transition of Main Street to a pedestrian area, should promote the unity of the park, and should increase its capacity for visitors.

Park development will be governed by the guidelines and policies of this plan, which includes design controls for historic restoration and development, appropriate adaptive use, and new development of park facilities, as well as outdoor features such as lighting, signage, and street furniture. The park goals and intent of this plan are to promote historic authenticity in development of structures and sites historically significant to El Pueblo's primary period of history.

4. **Authenticity**

All developments at El Pueblo—building restorations, concessions, site improvements—shall strive for historic authenticity. This does not mean antiquarianism, museum quality preservation, or re-creation of every object in isolation by its original construction method. It does not mean that sidewalks and plant materials will change in front of each building, that modern standards of comfort and safety will be eschewed, or that every building will be returned to its original use. It connotes more the informed approach to decision-making, which calls for the careful preservation of existing historic resources based on skillfully conducted restoration and historic research.
5. Circulation and Parking

The plan recommends closure of Main Street, establishing an interior system of pedestrian streets and outdoor activity areas, with a possible trolley bringing visitors to the historic area from the main parking facilities. The California State Park Commission supports the closure of Main Street.

Permanent parking will be located at the periphery of the historic core area, with convenient parking available close to new historic and commercial development.

The use of existing city and county parking lots would be encouraged for visitor use until permanent parking facilities are constructed.

This plan reaffirms the commitment of the State of California and the City and County of Los Angeles to the goals of El Pueblo Park. These commitments include:

1. Ultimate Boundary

   All property within the Ultimate Boundary of the Park should be within Park control. Lands now held by various City departments and by the County should be transferred in the "Project Area" of the Joint Powers, whether by a fee simple title transfer or by other means. (The Plaza, for example, is owned by the City but is under the Park's administration). The historic zone area cannot be developed until adequate parking is provided in the peripheral areas. Thus the existing Ultimate Boundary (with minor adjustment to the north) must be adhered to.

2. Unified Administration

   The Joint Powers, and the Park, must speak with one clear voice. The City of Los Angeles must clearly vest its authority in the Department of Recreation and Parks to carry out its duties as the designated administrator under the three party agreement. As well, individuals from City, County, and State must be authorized to represent their agencies on a formal and periodic basis.

3. Full Development

   The commitment to El Pueblo Park must be demonstrated by progress, by the reoccupancy of the buildings, by the capital improvements, and by the exhibits and programs.

   The Joint Powers must actively integrate the Park into their grant application and funding programs, and into their planning. The development envisioned for El Pueblo is a very real possibility, given an aggressive commitment, clear authorities, and creative financing. All potential funding sources must be explored.

   The development proposals and guidelines of the plan recognize the compatibility of historic objectives with appropriate commercial development.
Future Development -- Blending of Commerce and History

El Pueblo is charged with providing a "living memorial" to California life and history, and this plan places equal emphasis on "living" and "memorial". Exhibits and historical presentations can be entertaining as well as enlightening, while shops and commercial activities will be educational and illustrative of history. The Park will not be a single-use commercial and tourist destination, nor an untouchable museum.

It is important for life and activity to be returned to the buildings and to support park services with the revenue that is thus generated.

This plan is the Master Plan called for in the 1974 Joint Powers Agreement. It is essentially a flexible document designed to create guidelines for the proper development of the Park. It should be reviewed periodically to allow for appropriate amendments compatible with overall historic park objectives.

Cultural and Human Resource Sensitivity

As directed by the State Park and Recreation Commission,

1. El Pueblo managers and staff shall be sensitive to the Hispanic cultural background which has made Olvera Street the major attraction it has been for 48 years.

2. The human resources shall be bilingual in English and Spanish.

3. New development and commercial development shall not overshadow the merchants of Olvera Street.
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Plan

General Purpose

The purpose of the general plan is to provide general guidelines for management, interpretation, and development of El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park. This plan will serve as a vehicle for communication of the city, county, and state's intentions to the public, in accordance with the park's classification, declaration of purpose, and the stated purpose in the Joint Powers Agreement of 1974. This reads as follows:

"WHEREAS, STATE, COUNTY, and CITY have cooperated to establish within the territorial boundaries of the City of Los Angeles a permanent historical park to be developed, maintained, and operated as a living memorial to the history and tradition of California life and environment, as a part of the State Park System, to preserve and recreate the Old Pueblo of Los Angeles and the colorful life of the period in which it was established, operated, and maintained, and to interpret the story of its founding, growth, and evolution into the Los Angeles of today, with the understanding that in the attainment of these objectives, cultural, commercial, and economic activities in keeping with the spirit and atmosphere of Los Angeles shall be encouraged..."

This plan was prepared by the State Department of Parks and Recreation, in collaboration with the City of Los Angeles (through its El Pueblo staff of the Department of Parks and Recreation) and with the County of Los Angeles.

The plan is the first for this park in response to the mandate of the Public Resources Code. The plan is also intended to meet the City of Los Angeles' "Master Plan" requirement, under the 1974 Joint Powers Agreement for El Pueblo.

Specific Purpose:

1. To identify and evaluate the park's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

2. To establish policies for management, protection, and interpretation of these resources.

3. To determine visitor activities and land uses that are compatible with the purpose of the park, the available resources, and the surrounding area.

4. To determine the potential environmental impact of visitor activities, land use, and related development.

5. To establish guidelines for the recommended sequence of park development.

6. To provide an informational document for the public, the legislature, park personnel, and other government agencies.
Project Description/Location

El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park lies in the center of the busy and extensive downtown Los Angeles area. The historic park is near Los Angeles City Hall to the southwest, Union Station to the east, and Chinatown to the north. The southern boundary of El Pueblo is the Hollywood-Santa Ana Freeway, and major freeway interchanges are nearby. This park is easily accessible from the downtown area, while freeways provide ready access to areas outside the downtown sector.

Ownership/Project Boundaries

El Pueblo is an amalgamation of many plots of land in the downtown area. Lands owned by the State of California include properties in the Pico-Garnier Block, the Olvera Street Block, and smaller parcels north of these blocks. Many parcels outside these areas have been slated for inclusion in the historic park. These parcels, in combination with the state-owned and local government properties, make up the property within the ultimate boundary (Figure 1). The total land within the ultimate boundary is 17.8 ha. (44 acres).

Existing Project Area

This includes lands owned by the State of California and the City of Los Angeles. The City is the authorized administrator of the park under the 1974 Joint Powers Agreement executed by the State, City, and County of Los Angeles. Lands within the project area are subject to all policies, rules, and regulations of the State Department of Parks and Recreation and this General Plan.

Historical Background

By September 4, 1781, establishment of the pueblo of Los Angeles was complete. The official name of the Spanish town founded by the Governor of the Californios, Felipé de Neve, was El Pueblo de La Reina de Los Angeles, (the town of the Queen of the Angels). From its earliest days, the settlers of the pueblo were of varied ethnic origins: Indian, Spanish, African, and mixed parentage. They were farmers, who had been recruited by Captain Fernando Rivera y Moncada from the areas of Sinaloa and Sonora in Mexico, and included 11 families, with a total of 44 people.

It was not until after the torrential rains of 1815 that the pueblo was moved away from the Los Angeles River to higher grounds at the present site of El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park. Construction of a new church, which opened onto a plaza immediately northwest of the present-day plaza, began in 1818; the building was not completed until 1822. The area now known as the plaza was probably not laid out until sometime after 1825. One-story adobes, similar in style to the Avila Adobe built on Vine Street about 1818, were constructed around the plaza and in the nearby streets.

By the time Mexico had achieved its independence from Spain, the population of the pueblo had risen to about 800 people; one visitor counted 82 houses in the pueblo in 1828. The descendants of the Gabriellino Indians who had been living near the Los Angeles River when the Spanish explored the region in 1769 continued to live in the area, and were the major work force of the pueblo and the outlying ranchos and missions.
The state historic park is located within the former territory of the Gabrieleno Indians (the name derives from Mission San Gabriel). The Gabrieleno were a Shoshonean-speaking people who occupied much of the plain that is now the Los Angeles basin. Their range also extended to the islands of San Clemente and Santa Catalina. As with many coastal groups in California, contact between Euroamerican and native peoples resulted in a rapid decline in the indigenous human population, and a loss of many features of traditional lifestyle. The original site of the pueblo, which is generally considered to have been southeast of the present site, is said to have been near the village of Yang-na. No evidence has been found in the historical or archeological records of prehistoric occupation of the lands now included in the state historic park.

Ample evidence for Gabrieleno involvement with the plaza area during the historic period, however, can be found in the historical and archeological record. Almost 4,000 Gabrieleno people lived in the Los Angeles area during the early 1850s. Gabrieleno manufactured "mission ware." Pieces of this coarse, unglazed pottery were found in recent excavations in the Chinese store. This same pottery was unearthed in the Avila adobe, along with a hammerstone, a lithic core, two scrapers, and numerous stone flakes.

Los Angeles was raised to the status of a city by the Congress of Mexico, and was named the capital of Alta California on May 23, 1835. However, the officials did not see fit to move south from Monterey for another ten years.

By the 1830s, non-Spanish-speaking foreigners had arrived in Los Angeles. In order to acquire land, many of them married daughters of the ranchers, became naturalized Mexican citizens, and were converted to the Catholic faith. Some of them became successful merchants and large landowners.

For political reasons, the United States and Mexico went to war in 1846. Los Angeles was taken by Commodore Stockton in January 1847, and for ten days, the Avila Adobe was Stockton's headquarters while peace was being negotiated.

No drastic changes occurred in Los Angeles following California statehood in 1850. The excitement was in northern California, where gold had been discovered in 1848. Los Angeles remained Mexican in both tradition and speech.

As the city slowly began to grow, new ideas came to Los Angeles. For example, brickmaking began to replace the sun-dried adobe slabs used in construction. The Pelanconi House on Olvera Street, from this period, still stands. The last bullfight took place in 1860 and, almost simultaneously, the first baseball team was organized—a mark of the changing times.

In the 1860s, the Avila Adobe was turned into a boarding house, and was known variously as the Hotel Italia Unita and the Plaza Lodging House. For one brief period it served as a restaurant. The house remained the property of the Avila-Rimpau family and their descendants until 1953, when it was acquired by the State of California. In 1877, Vine Street was officially renamed Olvera Street, after Judge Agustin Olvera, whose house fronted on the north side of the Plaza.
By 1860, the population of Los Angeles was more than 4,000 persons, including about 400 people of French origin. Many of the old families had moved away to the newer areas of Los Angeles, and the Chinese and other newcomers moved into the Plaza area. Statewide, the Chinese had been a target for discrimination and abuse, and racial tension was strong in Los Angeles as well. On October 24, 1871, Los Angeles had a race riot in which 19 Chinese were killed, and their homes looted and burned.

The census of 1860 showed a population of 4,399. (Of this number, 400 were of French origin.) By this time, many of the old families living in town houses around the Plaza had moved away or back to their ranchos, and Chinese people and other newcomers moved into the area. The Chinese were not popular with the American and Mexican members of the community. Racial tensions arose, and trouble followed. The most serious outcome of this situation was a dreadful massacre which took place on October 24, 1871. Two men, members of different Chinese tongs or nations, were fighting close to the old Coronel adobe, off the Calle de Los Negros. An American bystander tried to intervene, and was accidentally killed. This set off a wave of mob violence, which ended with the deaths of 19 innocent Chinese. Although some 50 people participated in the mob scene, only 7 men were convicted, and they were later set free on a legal technicality. Life in Los Angeles continued much as before, although the rest of the world was outraged at such brutality. The Chinese were considered second-class citizens, and the city council passed ordinances discriminating against them.

In order to revive the old Plaza area, Pio Pico built a grand hotel in 1869. To raise funds for this venture, he mortgaged his landholding in the San Fernando Valley for $115,000. The hotel was designed by Ezra F. Kysor, and built of brick. When the hotel opened in June 1870, it was elegantly furnished, with bathrooms on each floor. However, it was a poor financial venture, and in 1880, it sold at auction for $16,000. South of the Pico House, William and Merced Abbot built the Merced Theater. Although not a very successful theater, it was the first building constructed for this purpose in Los Angeles.

At the same time the Abbots and Pio Pico were building on the Plaza, a landscaping project was begun. The Plaza took on the circular shape it has today, and sometime between 1875 and 1877, the large Moreton Bay fig trees (Ficus macrophylla) were planted.

In 1884, men of the Volunteer 30's fire engine company built the city's first official fire house on the southwest corner of the plaza. These men were the first paid firefighting unit in the city, and they remained on the Plaza until 1897. The building was later used as a saloon, lodging house, and store.

In 1890, Philippe Garnier constructed a sandstone and brick building on Los Angeles Street. This was for use of the Chinese tenants, who completed the building to their own specifications. In the custom of the period, this building, like the Merced Theater, had large underground basements, used for various kinds of purposes.
In 1887, Eloisa Martinez de Sepulveda built a two-story brick building, the "Sepulveda Block," fronting Main Street, with a rear entrance on Olvera Street. It was to serve as a combination of businesses and residences, and still stands as a good example of Eastlake Victorian architecture.

By 1900, the area had declined considerably, and was chosen by Henry Huntington's Los Angeles Railway Company as a logical site for a power transforming plant located between Olvera and Los Angeles streets. The Plaza Substation (built in 1904) was a large brick building with arched windows, pilasters, and a roof supported by elaborate wooden trusses.

The old Plaza Church outgrew the needs of the modern-day congregation, and in 1965, a larger structure was erected behind the old church to meet this need.

In 1926, a Methodist Church was constructed facing the Plaza. The church conference headquarters were located next to the church, in a building now named for Sheriff Eugene W. Biscailuz, a man who served in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for nearly fifty-two years.

That same year, Christine Sterling found the historic section around the Old Plaza in a dirty, disreputable condition. Olvera Street was a slum, and on November 22, 1928, the Avila Adobe had a condemnation notice tacked to its front door. With the help of Harry Chandler, publisher of the LOS ANGELES TIMES, and several other prominent business and professional leaders of the community, she saved the adobe, and in 1930, created a colorful Mexican marketplace in Olvera Street. She brought fiestas and colorful Mexican traditions to Olvera Street, with the help of the Mexican-American community.

Across the street from the Plaza to the east, the old Chinatown was demolished to make way for the Union Station. Designed by Donald and John Parkinson shortly before World War II, it was the last large railroad terminal built in the United States. Chinatown was relocated north of Olvera Street.

For many years, Olvera Street was managed by a group of citizens called the ElPueblo Corporation. In 1953, the street became part of ElPueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park, and other historic buildings in the area were acquired soon after. A new commission was created to administer the park, consisting of representatives from the state, county, and city. After a few years, it became apparent that little could be accomplished by this group, and it was dissolved, along with the ElPueblo Corporation. A new tripartite agreement was drawn up and signed on April 1, 1974, by the same signators. It specified that the City of Los Angeles would administer the historic park, with the state holding the right to review and approve the operating budget and capital improvements.
During the 1950s and '60s, the facades of several of the historic buildings were restored. Unfortunately, funds ran out, and except for the rebuilding and refurbishing of the Avila Adobe, the Firehouse, and the Masonic Lodge (built in 1858) as museums, very little restoration has been accomplished. Considerably more restoration efforts, however, have been started in the 1970s.

The twentieth century has been the time of the greatest expansion of the City of Los Angeles, particularly since the Second World War. It is hoped that by the Pueblo's 200th birthday in 1981, a program of intensive, careful restoration will be in progress, designed to create for all the diverse peoples of California a true historic park in the area that contains so much of their heritage.

*Pelanconi House - Olvera Street 1925*
Planning Background

Some acknowledgement must be given of the enormous amount of planning that has gone into development (or lack thereof) of the park.

The following is a list of plans that have been prepared over the years between 1947 (when the idea of an historic park was first conceived) and today, when the present general plan is offered as a guide to the ultimate development for the area, and to satisfy the legal requirements of the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation.

July 21, 1947, REDEVELOPMENT OF THE LOS ANGELES PLAZA AREA, a preliminary report to the Plaza de Los Angeles Inc. prepared by Burnett C. Turner, with Charles Bennett of the City Planning Department. A plan to initiate urban redevelopment in the restoration of the Plaza area from its then blighted condition.

July 18, 1958, MASTER PLAN, approved by State, County, and City. Set up boundaries and planned for acquisition of buildings in area of proposed development.

October 19, 1967, PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT PLAN. A brief document prepared by the Los Angeles City Planning Department. Called for development of park, restoration of buildings and revision of street patterns to accommodate needs of both pedestrians and automobiles.

May 12, 1967, MASTER PLAN, prepared by Burnett C. Turner. Based on 1957/58 Master Plan, it provided drawings for streets, sewers, and utilities and other plans for buildings to be restored. It called for Main Street traffic to be realigned to Spring Street and for the demolition of County buildings in the area.


This was the first really far-reaching plan made for El Pueblo. It called not only for the restoration of the historic buildings but also for creating a pedestrian system for the entire area, and for providing links between Little Tokyo, the Civic Center, Chinatown, and Union Station. It went even further in suggesting that multicultural activity centers be built in different areas to reflect the various ethnic groups that make up the history of Los Angeles, and to create a focus for expanded tourist and visitor activities.

This plan called for changing the name of El Pueblo from "State Historic Monument" to State Historic Park," which it has been called from this date on.

March 5, 1971, EL PUEBLO GARAGE FEASIBILITY STUDY. Associated Parking Consultants (Linscott Associates and Robert Crommelin Associates) recommended a site for a proposed 500 space parking garage on an area now used for surface parking (County Lot 25 and El Pueblo Lot 1). (This plan was prepared before archeology had been done on Parking Lot 1 which revealed significant archeological deposits.)
November 1, 1972, AD HOC MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE REPORT. Los Angeles Plaza Historic Park proposed General Plan. This was a geographic development plan which took into account the "historical patterns as well as the ethnic occupation of the Plaza area." This plan set out policies in a form which was intentionally brief, allowing for details to be delineated in a future development plan.

The plan was prepared by a committee between April and November 1972. It was not concerned with commercial development of the Pueblo.

July 20, 1976, EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORIC PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN by A. C. Martin and Associates. On a less grand scale than the Pollak-Barsocchini plan, this plan nevertheless tried to define the park as a distinctive place and recognized its enormous potential. It recommended "practical strategies for implementation" and of "realistic market projections."

The plan called for a phased approach for restoration of the historic buildings. It defined El Pueblo as a place of great historic significance and suggested improved ways of interpreting this. It also described the problems caused by existing street and traffic patterns.

A major part of the plan was devoted to a Market Feasibility Analysis prepared by Russell/Speicher and Associates to determine the commercial development potential at El Pueblo park, with particular reference to the Pico-Garnier Block.

The A. C. Martin Plan was accepted by both the Advisory Committee for El Pueblo and by the City Recreation and Parks Commission, but was not officially presented to the State, since it had not yet been officially approved by the County. However, unofficial word had been received from State officials indicating that the plan would not be acceptable as it was because it did not place sufficient emphasis on historic preservation and restoration in the park.

Accordingly, in 1977/78 the State Department of Parks and Recreation prepared, with the help of the El Pueblo staff, a RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN outlining the history and cultural resources of the historic park. This plan was approved by the State Park and Recreation Commission on September 15, 1978, and is now incorporated in the General Plan for El Pueblo as the Resource Element.

During the preparation of the General Plan some further studies were made:

EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORIC PARK: TRAFFIC STUDY by Daniel S. Kupfer, September 1979, which attempted to show the feasibility of preventing disruptive vehicular traffic on Main Street through the park and of providing alternative routes without adversely affecting surrounding community streets.


A study of PARKING AT EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORIC PARK by Shirley Hsiao, April 1979. This assessed the amount of parking available in the park and the adjacent areas and recommended the formation of a joint City/County parking authority to administer it.
Management History of the El Pueblo Area

Through the efforts of Mrs. Christine Sterling, a group of public-spirited people banded together in the 1920s to try to save the historic area of Los Angeles from destruction. On May 2, 1928, they formed a corporation known as Plaza de Los Angeles, Inc., and together, they saved the Avila Adobe from destruction, restored it, and created a Mexican market place in Olvera Street, which opened in 1930. This corporation (dissolved on July 19, 1957) was replaced by a non-profit corporation, El Pueblo de Los Angeles, Inc., formed March 9, 1954.

In the meantime, an agreement was signed on June 22, 1953, by the state (through its State Park Commission), the County of Los Angeles, and the City of Los Angeles. Under the terms of this document, the county and city each deposited $375,000 in the State Treasury, to match $750,000 approved by the State Legislature for the purpose of acquiring properties in the area bounded by Arcadia, Main, Alameda, and Macy streets, in order to establish a "permanent historic monument as part of the State Park System." The city was also to make Sanchez and Olvera Streets available for the monument. The state contracted with the city and county for management of the area. Development was to be "pursuant to the Master Plan" which was to be prepared. Provision was made for contracting to other parties the development, management, and operation of the monument, and for concession agreements.

On October 22, 1955, the state contracted with the county and city for operation of El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Monument, and for making a master plan to "delineate development construction."

On November 18, 1955, the state approved an agreement between the county and city, authorizing the city's Department of Recreation and Parks to act as administrator of the monument.

On June 12, 1956, the county and city designated the city's Department of Recreation and Parks as county/city representative, and stated that the department should "perform, exercise and enjoy all the duties, powers, rights and privileges for and on behalf of both City and County."

On May 18, 1956, the California State Park Commission approved a management agreement whereby El Pueblo de Los Angeles, a non-profit corporation, would "manage the Olvera Street unit."

On December 1, 1965, a joint powers agreement was signed by all three governmental bodies, setting up a new commission composed of eleven members, including five state appointees and three members each appointed by city and county. (There were also three alternates.) This commission continued to contract out management of Olvera Street to the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Corporation.

This agreement and contractual arrangement were revoked by a new agreement signed by the state, county, and city on April 1, 1974, under which the city, through its Recreation and Parks department, was charged with the administration and development of El Pueblo, while the state retained the right to approve both operating and capital improvement budgets and all development activity. The agreement also called for preparation of a new master plan. The park is operated today under this agreement.
Public Involvement Program

Citizen participation has been important to the existence and continuing success of Olvera Street, and the area now defined as a historic park.

A public meeting to begin the planning process for a general plan for the park was held in February 1979 by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, in cooperation with the El Pueblo State Historic Park staff.

Representatives of the City of Los Angeles, which administers the park, and the Department of Parks and Recreation discussed the background and present status of the park, explained the planning process, and conducted a workshop session to receive suggestions and public comments on major issues and concerns for the park's development.

In attendance were about 135 people from the Mexican and Chinese communities in the Los Angeles area. Others who attended were representatives of Los Angeles city and county agencies, and individuals of various professional backgrounds, all with particular interests in future development and management of El Pueblo.

As a result of the workshop sessions, the planning team received more than 650 individual comments concerning every aspect of the general plan, and El Pueblo in particular. This information was organized into a summary newsletter, sent to more than 500 people on the El Pueblo mailing list.

In order to adequately address public concerns about this plan, a program of meetings, newsletters, and personal contacts was developed to gather and exchange information and to hear local opinions and concerns for the future of the park.

Additional meetings, workshops, and an open house were conducted by state and city historic park staff, to further evaluate public and agency comments, and to develop a single plan recommendation.

The final plan presented in this report can not necessarily provide for all the desires and concerns expressed by the general public. However, it attempts to provide the necessary guidelines, and to develop solutions that incorporate facilities and activities compatible with the cultural and historic community values of the park.

The "Community" with interests at El Pueblo is represented by various organizations: the El Pueblo Advisory Committee, the Olvera Street Merchants’ Association, the support groups Las Angelitas and Los Amigos del Pueblo, Les Dames de Los Angeles, and the Box 15 Club, as well as the conservation and historic groups of Southern California.

Recently, the work of staff and support groups has been augmented by the contributions of a special subcommittee of professionals from the LA 200 Committee, which convened regularly to assist in preparation of this plan.