

Fairmount Park was designated as City Landmark #69 on December 18, 1985. The information summarized above is only a small excerpt of Fairmount Parks history. The Landmark Resolution specifies that the designation includes all publicly visible elements of the park, including, but not limited to, the configuration of the lakeshores, the Fairmount Park Bandshell (destroyed in fire in 1992), the Fairmount Park Golf Course, the grounds of the Riverside Lawn Bowling Club, the Fairmount Park Rose Garden, the Food Machinery Corporation "Water Buffalo", Union Pacific Engine No. 6051, and the three Mission Revival restroom buildings.

In 1981 the Boy Scouts of America gave approximately 2.5 acres of land north of Mission Inn Ave. and Scout Lane to the City of Riverside.

On January 21, 2026, staff received input on the Fairmount Park Master Plan from the Cultural Heritage Board.

DISCUSSION:

Fairmount Park Master Plan Status

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department (PRCSD) issued an RFP for preparation of the Fairmount Park Master Plan in September 2024. Multiple consultants submitted proposals and MIG Inc. was eventually selected as the prime consultant for this assignment. Work began in early 2025. MIG is a planning and design consultant with a specialty in park planning and design.

Work completed to date includes:

- Evaluated the existing conditions including a detailed site topographic survey
- Reviewed current deferred maintenance efforts
- Evaluated the original 1911 Olmsted Brothers Plan
- Evaluated past studies and evaluations of the park
- Conducted an analysis of the changes that have occurred over time
- Conducted three in-person meetings at the Issac Walton Building with the Fairmount Park Master Task Force (May 1, June 5, and September 25, 2025)
- Conducted two in-person Open Houses at the Armory June 26, 2025, and November 3, 2025, that drew over 100 community members
- Facilitated an Intertribal Summit with over 20 members from local Tribes to discuss the Master Plan at the Stewart Boathouse September 30, 2025
- Conducted several meetings with the University Wash design team including in-person on May 1, 2025
- Met with the Scouts of America in-person on May 1, 2025
- Facilitated an in-person meeting with Fairmount Golf Course golfers July 29, 2025
- Conducted numerous internal city meetings with representatives from Finance, Historic Preservation Office, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation, and Community Services
- Field visit to the Glen Oaks Golf Course in Glendora (Sept 22, 2025)
- Field visit to the Moreno Valley Civic Center Amphitheater (Sept 25, 2025)
- Consider current amenities including, but not limited to the lakes, rose garden, band shell, armory, golf course, boat house, Issak Walton building, tennis courts, lawn bowling center, playgrounds, and open spaces
- Evaluated vacant land and underutilized land within the park
- Reviewed potential uses and renovation of auxiliary buildings throughout the park

- Explored synergies with adjacent uses and properties including the church property on the southwest side of the park
- Articulated and recommended improved circulation of the park for motor vehicles (including parking), pedestrians, bicycles, and skateboards
- Based on input from the stakeholders and community, the team has prepared several initial opportunities for the enhancement of the park including order of magnitude cost estimates

Upcoming tasks:

- Continue to make updates to the project website
https://riversideca.gov/park_rec/planning-projects/master-plan/fairmount-park-master-plan
- Conduct additional meetings with the Task Force in February and March 2026
- Conduct another Intertribal Summit in 2026
- Prepare a draft master plan and final master plan of the park based on stakeholder and community input
- Consider the process to get Fairmount Park placed on the National Register of Historic Places

The goal of the project is to chart a path to enhance the park to increase activity while preserving the historic integrity of the park. The final product will be a cultural landscape masterplan and report that will follow historic research standards. The Master plan will include a conceptual plan of the entire 280 acres that features the park historic core.

CEQA, NEPA, agency permits, and registration of Fairmount Park on the National Register of Historic Places will not be completed as part of this effort. Once the Fairmount Park Master Plan is completed, the city will be in a stronger position to seek funding including private and corporate donations and grant funding to make future improvements to the park. It is the goal of PRCSO to list this resource on the National Register of Historic Places at a later time.

Fairmount Park Master Plan Draft Recommendations

The preliminary recommendations within the draft Fairmount Park Master Plan are based on input from the community members through in-person and on-line engagement, the Master Plan Task Force, stakeholders, Tribal input, and the PRCSO. These key recommendations include the following:

1. Bandshell – The original bandshell was extensively damaged by a fire in October 1992 and reconstructed in 1993. Although the intent was to reconstruct the bandshell as close as possible, some of the original elements were not reconstructed and the only original material and features included the rock clad rooms that flank the bandshell and the concrete podium. Additionally, the bandshell is no longer functional and does not meet today's requirements for staging events. These deficiencies include but are not limited to electrical power, lighting, audio/visual, stage size, storage, security, accessibility, talent green rooms and on-going maintenance. The recommendation is to rebuild the original bandshell near the same location albeit with a slightly larger stage, yet in the same architectural design, and including improvements to power, lighting, audio/visual, storage, security, accessibility, and talent green rooms. The river rock that clad the existing wings to the left and right and the barrel tile on the roof of the bandshell could be reused in the rebuilt bandshell. In addition, the rebuilt bandshell should maintain the proportions and

- aesthetics of the existing bandshell. The existing dedication plaques could be cleaned and remounted on the future dedication of the recreated bandshell.
2. Train and Water Buffalo – The existing train engine and water buffalo are recommended to be protected and remain in their existing locations.
 3. Golf Course – There are several options being considered for improvements to the golf course. These options include improvements to the existing driving range, relocating and expanding the driving range to the north side along the SR-60 off-ramp to Market Street, expanding the golf course to the east along Market Street, creating a new pitch and putt course on the north edge of Brown Lake, and a multi-purpose bike and pedestrian promenade on the west and north edges of the golf course that connects to the Santa Ana River Trail. The city will be soliciting interest from the private sector for a partner, lessee, or concessionaire.
 4. Cypress Trees – Fairmount Park includes many historic Cypress Trees that a prominent aesthetic feature of the park. The plan is to preserve them as much as possible and to plant additional Cypress Trees.
 5. Lake Improvements – Like the Cypress Trees, the three lakes at Fairmount Park are an important historic and aesthetic resource that provide habitat for birds and fish and provides numerous recreational opportunities such as fishing and boating. The Master Plan includes recommendations that will improve water quality, improve the boat ramps, and improve the lake edges for better access.
 6. Circulation and Parking Improvements – The Master Plan includes recommendations that will improve circulation and increase the amount of parking without adversely affecting the park. Circulation improvements include realigning Bowling Green Drive and Redwood Drive to better connect Market Street to the golf course and Bubbling Wells neighborhood, a roundabout at the eastern main entry into the park from Market Street, reduce the number of drivers using the park as a cut-through to get to and from the freeways by closing Locust Street and Fairmount Park Boulevard, and replacing two vehicular bridges with new bridges (the Bowling Green Drive bridge over Spring Brook tributary and the Redwood Drive bridge between Fairmount Lake and Lake Evans). Parking improvements include a new parking lot (with a possible parking deck) southeast of the bandshell parking lot. This area is currently occupied by the City Yard, unimproved dirt areas, and roads.
 7. Evaluate Property – The Master Plan may include recommendations for the evaluation and disposition of underutilized parcels for higher and better uses that would provide added revenue for park improvements and ongoing maintenance and the purchase of properties.
 8. Armory Improvements – Proposed improvements to the Armory include transforming it into a restaurant and brewery and pickleball courts.
 9. Scouts of America – The Master Plan team has had numerous meetings with the Scouts of America, and they are very interested in reestablishing their presence in the park. The city is currently in discussion with the Scouts regarding next steps.
 10. National Register of Historic Places – The Master Plan recommends that Fairmount Park be registered on the National Register of Historic Places. Generally, to be registered, properties must be at least 50 years old and maintain their integrity in location, design,

setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The criteria for registering for the park are as follows:

- a. Event: Association with significant historical events.
- b. Person: Association with important historical figures.
- c. Design/Construction: Embodying distinctive design, construction, artistic value, or representing a significant entity.
- d. Information Potential: Likely to yield important historical information.

University Wash Status

University Wash (also known as Springbrook Wash), flows into the lake system at Fairmount Park and through to the Santa Ana River, carrying sediment, trash, and debris from upstream environments. The hydraulics and hydrology of the segment of University Wash between Market Street and the lake system in Fairmount Park are not functioning well, causing flooding within the park and carrying sediment into the lakes, reducing water depth and water quality. Flooding in the park requires street closures which negatively impact circulation and is a drain on City resources to repeatedly clean-up afterwards. In 2025, the City entered into a Funding Agreement in which the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFCWCD) is providing \$2,000,000 for the City to use towards design and engineering costs to remedy these issues. RCFCWCD is also planning to fund the construction of these improvements after the design and engineering plans are completed. On March 4, 2025, the City Council approved an agreement with the engineering consultant, IDS Group, Inc. Design and engineering work is in progress, and construction is planned to start in 2027.

Rose Garden Status

Improvements are needed planned for the rose garden to provide a wheelchair accessible path to the gazebo. Other desired improvements include replacement of the gazebo, rose planting, irrigation improvements, and lighting/electrical improvements to better support rentals for private events. The project was bid in November 2025, but costs came in too high and bids were rejected. The project will be re-bid in spring/summer 2026 with a reduced scope of work.

Water Quality Information – Parks is diligently working with the Water Quality Board to secure a current test of water quality for both lakes. In the interim, we are proud to report that Riverside Public Utilities confirmed that water meets or exceeds all State and Federal Regulations within the distribution system. Water Quality Reports are available on the RPU website.

CalFire Grant – Hazardous Fire Fuel Reduction Status

The City has received \$1,416,920 (FY2022-2023) and \$1,808,800 (FY2023-2024) grants from CalFire's Wildfire Prevention Grant program to conduct multi-phase hazardous fire fuel reduction work in the undeveloped Camp Evans area of Fairmount Park. Fire fuel reduction work primarily involves removal of non-native and invasive plants and trees such as Giant Arundo, Mexican Fan Palms, Castor Bean, Salt Cedar, and Blue Gum Eucalyptus. The work is underway.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this update.

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Attachments:

1. Fairmount Park Master Plan Draft

2. Fairmount Park Circulation Plan Draft
3. Presentation