



# CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

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California 92648

## COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

(714) 536-5486

**To:** Community Services Commission  
**From:** Roy Miller, Commissioner  
**Date:** August 19, 2016  
**Subject:** ***CONDITION OF CENTRAL PARK***

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### **STATEMENT OF ISSUE:**

On August 8, 2016 the Community Services Commissioners received an email from Dave Dominguez's office regarding an article submitted by Shari Engel entitled "Central Park is Dying." The article describes the deteriorating condition of Central Park and how concrete solutions are needed. The article also expresses the importance of maintaining Central Park and the conditions that exist such as:

- Failing asphalt paths with large cracks
- Old rusted trash cans with old metal supports falling over
- Trees that have never been pruned or maintained properly
- Ineffective irrigation systems
- Homeless encampments due to overgrown/unmaintained areas
- Huge grass areas destroyed by ground squirrel infestation
- Invasive passion vines taking sunlight away so trees and bushes die
- Deteriorating restrooms
- Recently planted young trees that are dead

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

I propose that the Community Services Commission directs the Huntington Central Park Committee to address the conditions of Central Park and report to the Community Services Commission their findings.

SHARI ENGLE EMAIL COMMUNICATION, 8/8/16  
CHRIS EPTING BLOG ARTICLE,  
"CENTRAL PARK IS DYING"

**ATTACHMENT #J-1**

**From:** [shari\\_engel](#)  
**To:** [Gomez, Charlene](#)  
**Subject:** community services commission  
**Date:** Sunday, August 07, 2016 1:35:30 PM

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Hello,  
Can you email the Huntington Beach Commission  
this article? (if not can you tell who can): [“Central Park is Dying”](#)  
Thank you, Shari Engel

### **“Central Park is Dying”**

My friend Shari Engel wrote me what I considered to be a very  
powerful not several days ago. It is included in i...

## Surf City Chronicles

stories by chris epting

<https://surfcitychronicles.com/2016/08/03/central-park-is-dying/>



## “Central Park is Dying”

Posted on [August 3, 2016](#) by [christianepting](#)

My friend Shari Engel wrote me what I considered to be a very powerful not several days ago. It is included in its entirety here, along with some images she has taken. You may know that Shari, along with her husband Steve and a tireless, dedicated group of volunteers work hard to enhance, protect and preserve many facets of the park.

But it’s clearly not enough. There has been some great help offered by various people, elected and otherwise (as she details) but as a city I think it’s time to come together and start offering some concrete solutions, lest we wake up one day to a dead Central Park.

Thank you, Shari, for writing this...



Central Park is Dying. Yes, I USED TO BE lured by the GREEN in my peripheral vision as I walked on the asphalt paths.



**Armstrong  
Nursery view  
into Central  
Park from  
it's parking lot**

But, when I became a '3 day a week' volunteer in the park and got up close to the trees and vegetation I saw dying trees and plants.

For two years I have been part of a team, restoring the garden behind the Central Park Library (The Secret Garden).

It was known as the Xeriscape Garden, when it was planted 30 years ago. That was a widely used term, back then, meaning drought tolerant.



The Xeriscape (Secret) Garden paths were uneven/unsafe and the plants were growing so close to the trail you had to duck and dive to get through. Most of the garden was so thick with weeds you couldn't see in.



Two encampments were removed. Much like Shipley Nature Center, it had become overgrown with invasives and the investment and design were nearly lost.

These two areas of Central Park represent how creating a park may be important and exciting, but maintaining it is imperative. Delayed maintenance is not a cost saving plan. If a park can not be maintained properly then we need to delay building them.

**Armstrong  
Nursery view  
into Central  
Park from  
it's parking lot**



The concept of our 350 acre Central Park by a group of city visionaries began in the late 60's. The park was opened in 1974. That is an amazing accomplishment!

<http://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/files/users/library/complete/080118-2.pdf>



Just as we were cutting the ribbon for our Central Park, New York's 843 acre Central Park was degrading due to minimal maintenance and misuse. New York's budget crisis further hastened the park's demise.

<http://www.centralparknyc.org/about/about-cpc/>

Central Park still has enough green to lull people into believing it is healthy and thriving.

Unfortunately, I only see the:

1. Failing asphalt paths with large cracks. Recent, expensive Community Services Master Plan Survey said the most used city Facility, is Central Park. And the number one activity is walking. Why didn't we just spend that money on repairing the asphalt paths in CP instead?
2. OLD rusted metal trash cans whose OLD metal supports are falling over. 40% of Central Park has no trash cans at all.
3. Trees that have never been pruned or routinely maintained, ever. One worker, with the city parks maint. dept. for 30 years, attests to that and so do the dead trees.
4. Irrigation system that is old and ineffective for maintaining healthy trees (bore beetle invades stressed/unhealthy trees). The park is watered with potable water. When the city had to cut back water, they cut back even more on watering the park lawn, thus the trees. If it had been non-potable water the trees might have been watered more. <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7421.html>
5. Recently planted young trees, that are dead, but remain propped up (barely) by supports, as if there is hope for them, to come back to life.
6. Over 140 mulch mounds, where there once stood a tree. **There are now huge areas, barren of trees.**
7. Shipley temporary parking lot (which was on the master plan long before the Senior Center build) is a fugitive dust bowl (carcinogenic). 14,000 teachers and students breathe that dust yearly (10 years and counting). Plants on its perimeter are dead from the choking dust! Park Commission paints efforts to install the permanent lot (on 1990 master plan) now, as an attack on open space. <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/silicacrystalline/>
8. Traffic hazard (on Goldenwest) quadrupled while Shipley parking lot driveway remains open, just a few yards north of new right turn into Senior Center. It was supposed to be closed and access was to be off of the new Talbert entrance....Accident waiting to happen?
9. Huge grass areas destroyed by the ground squirrel infestation. Presently they are digging into root systems of mature trees and soon will topple them. They dug, till they exposed the irrigation pvc pipes and created holes that could cause a broken ankle. They have entered into the Secret Garden continuing their efforts to enlarge their intricate tunneling. The poor positioning (10 feet off the ground) of signage, educating the public about why they should NOT feed them, is NOT working. The most widely used areas for feeding have no signage.
10. Two of the most poisonous plants grow unchecked in the park. Castor bean (the most poisonous plant on planet) grows alongside Poison Hemlock (the most poisonous plant in California).
11. Invasive species like passion vine and bamboo are tolerated in the park. Passion vine curtains that envelop the now dead bushes and trees, create a false notion of a green/healthy park. The low level park maintenance contract (mow and blow) will invite more of our investment to be lost to invasives.
12. Homeless encampments numbers are growing. The overgrown/unmaintained areas of the park are inviting the wrong use. Two cooking fires have occurred in the last year (latest in July). The relocation of the Interfaith Trailer has produced a worsening of the Central Park Library/Park homeless problem. Why did the city think it would be different at Central Park/Library? <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/bcis-408925-library-city.html>
13. Fullerton had to close a library due to the homeless issue and San Bernardino had to close a park. How many more people will the library have to hire to keep order or will we have to close it? <https://fullertonag.com/2013/03/29/the-beginning-of-the-end-of-the-hunt/>  
<http://www.pe.com/articles/park-677662-library-city.html>
14. No ongoing presence of authority in the park. Easter Sunday has thousands of people in the park. There was no policing, no extra restrooms, no extra trash cans, no one to deter the public driving on the trails. No citations of drinking in the park. Drinking and Driving Easter Extravaganza. The trash is still present

from the yearly 'un-event' Free-For-All. But it isn't free to taxpayers; our park is abused and someone has to clean it up and pay for litigation when someone gets hurt.

15. The bathrooms are deteriorating and the overnighters misuse from them being open year round, 24/7 has taken it's toll. If you ever see Lucina, cleaning them, please THANK her. She is a very nice, hardworking, petite lady (with a big smile) that probably isn't noticed by many.
16. Ongoing male prostitution and drug use in the park. Won't say what I have picked up in the park from these activities. Disgusting!
17. Our only Central Park sign fell down almost two years ago (wood rot, termites). It was just replaced after a very long wait. The area surrounding the sign has NOT been improved, the years old planting is not maintained and looks sad.



I look at the pictures of Central Park New York in the 70's and wonder where were the park protectors when it was not maintained and sad?

It got soooo bad before someone grabbed a shovel and started to take back what had been lost.

If you can't grab a shovel, at least write your council and ask for a plan for Central Park.

It takes years for a tree to provide a shade canopy. We are now the visionaries for the future of our park.



We can not afford to wait any longer for a plan. WE NEED A PLAN NOW!!

Thank you Michael Gates, Barbara Delgleize and Eric Peterson for helping to improve our beautiful Central Park!

Thank you to the Parks Maintenance Dept. for producing the needed changes requested on Surf City Pipeline, in a professional and timely manner.

Thank you to the Police Department for trying to stem the tide of the negative activities in CP. We know you can't be the answer to every problem. The answer is good laws, ordinances and a Park Ranger.

Thank you Jean Nagy, President of the HB Tree Society for continuing the effort to beautify HB and plant trees.  
<http://hbtrees.org/>

ITEM DISTRIBUTED TO COMMISSION

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RENOVATION PROJECT  
FOR ORANGE COUNTY HARRIET WIEDER PARK  
BY THE BOLSA CHICA CONSERVANCY

**ATTACHMENT #L-1**



## **Harriett Wieder Regional Park Restoration Executive Summary**

The Bolsa Chica Conservancy is a private, nonprofit organization that has provided educational and habitat restoration programs for over 25 years in Huntington Beach. Since its inception, more than 500,000 visitors of all ages have participated in the Conservancy's educational and restoration programs throughout the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. The Conservancy will involve the public again during upland restoration at the Harriett Wieder Regional Park (HWRP).

The Bolsa Chica Conservancy is restoring a 9.5-acre portion of HWRP (see Figure 1 below) using \$475,000 in Measure M funds approved by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors in 2012. Measure M funds are specifically earmarked for mitigating impacts to native habitat from regional transportation improvements. The goal is to restore wildlife habitat by removing invasive, nonnative plants and planting appropriate native plants to increase species diversity and native coverage. The project will take place over the next five years, beginning in the fall of 2016 and culminating fall of 2021.

The Conservancy's restoration project (Project) will provide significant benefits to regionally important biological resources, and will buffer existing wildlife in the Bolsa Chica Ecological Preserve. A project goal is to create habitat for sensitive species, including the Least Bell's Vireo, Coastal Cactus Wren, California Gnatcatcher, and the Burrowing Owl. A planting goal is to grow populations of Southern Tarplant, a rare, listed plant.

The Project will remove the 99% cover of invasive plants, and replace them with drought tolerant native plants. The existing trail system will remain in place, and one new overlook will be installed. Temporary symbolic fencing (single strand wire on posts) will be erected around restoration plots, with signage at intervals informing the public of active restoration. Fencing will remain in place until plants are established and function in the same manner, likely 4 – 6 years. Access to trails should remain unrestricted unless there is a safety concern with equipment.

Visible project site impacts include: filling of a long trench and smoothing of fill piles, ripping by OC Parks to loosen soils, installing a water line, watering for two grow-kill cycles for weed seed, install overlook and trail spur, mechanical seed imprinting, and container plant installation.

After these activities, weeding, monitoring, maintenance, and replacement planting follow.

The General Development Plan (GDP) for HWRP, adopted by the County of Orange in 1992 and later updated in 1997, calls for Wieder Park to be primarily passive in nature comprised of native habitat restoration areas, pedestrian trails, scenic overlooks and an interpretive center. The neighborhood park has been developed, and other GDP components as the interpretive center await funding. This project will not pave trails, stabilize the riparian ravine, remove oil and gas operations, install wetlands, impact cultural resources, or conduct mass grading per the GDP. It will provide soil and dust containment with deeply-rooted native plants, increased habitat values, a pleasing aesthetic, interpretive opportunities, overlook solitude, and enhanced public access.

The Project is within the City of Huntington Beach jurisdiction, and the Coastal Zone. The City of Huntington Beach considers this portion of Phase I of the GDP/ RMP as vested under their LCP. The Conservancy has prepared an Addendum to EIR 521 to evaluate potential impacts of the Restoration Plan. OC Parks will issue an encroachment permit for work performed within Harriett Wieder Park. OC Parks will restore and enhance 1-acre directly next to Seapoint Avenue in conjunction with the Conservancy's 9.5 acres.

Contact:  
David Pryor  
Bolsa Chica Conservancy  
714 846-1114

