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- The CAF will commit resources to the extent feasible to operate programs at a first class level, to increase attendance revenues and private support for The Arboretum.
- The term of this Operating Agreement is to be for 20 years.

Now that the Operating Agreement has been completed we are preparing to look to the future with a mutual sense of relief and anticipation. At all times both parties to the contract have had the best interests of The Arboretum at heart. We are now able to enjoy a synergy which will allow us to continue our existing operations more efficiently and make future planning more effective.

Our first task is to hire the new CEO. A joint committee of three representatives of the CAF and three from the County is charged with this task and has already held their first meeting. We are proceeding with all due speed on this front.

Concurrently, we are reviewing development plans, and other studies in our recent archives, in order to assess their relevance to our current Mission Statement. As soon as we have completed the review, we will prioritize these concepts. Although our new CEO will certainly be the driving force in any implementation, in order to attract a person of the highest caliber for this position we need to re-establish our focus.

This year as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the CAF we are reminiscing about the history of The Arboretum and those outstanding individuals who had the vision and dedication to found this 127-acre botanical institution. We will be celebrating the beginning of our second half-century and entering the next millennium. Our faces will be the ones in photographs studied in 2048. Let's be worthy successors to our founders! 🌱

Donivee Nash
President, Board of Trustees
California Arboretum Foundation

Linearity vs Systems Thinking

by Becca Hanson

There is no such thing as "before" or "after" - there is only "while at the same time."

The question has been posed: *Should physical master planning occur before or after strategic planning?* The following thoughts should help set the story straight.

It is very comforting for us to think that we can accomplish one task, the conclusion of which inevitable leads to the accomplishment of the subsequent task, and so forth, ad infinitum. The reality of the situation is quite different, whether the situation involves planning for our institutions or planning for our family's vacation. Rarely are individual tasks and results arranged in linear, continuously reinforcing sequences - much as our logical minds might cry out for such a scenario. So rather than try to create processes that depend on linearity, why not take a step aback and see if we can't set up systems that invite serendipity, continuous communication, and the cross-fertilization of ideas?

I have strong opinions about whether or not physical master planning should precede strategic planning. I believe that not only should the former not precede the latter, but that a third element, interpretive planning should be added to the equation.

Physical Master Planning deals with the reality of the bricks and mortar, the utility infrastructure and waste stream, the plants and pathways, and the need to get people (staff, deliveries, and visitors) to flow seamlessly through our facilities, delighted, and comfortable. It opens up the possibilities of special design elements and programming options.

Strategic Planning involves answering the question: What will it take to make this plan and this institution successful? It deals with issues of timing and organizational framework, funding

sources and fund-raising tactics. It opens up the possibilities of partnerships and communications planning.

Interpretive Planning is about identifying what your visitors know and what they need to know, determining the crucial areas of information for the future, and inventorying the collections and the institution to develop approaches to information exchange that provide thoughtful and stimulating communication. It opens up the possibilities of special design elements and communications planning.

Each of these incremental pieces of the planning continuum encompasses pieces that influence each of the others. 🌱

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Interpretive Planning: Why we are UNIQUE ...

The Arboretum of Los Angeles County is a beautiful, out of doors natural learning center about the inter-relatedness of plants, animals, and humans from pre-Columbian times. The garden as a whole is a living laboratory, green oasis for visitors, and microcosms of wildlife. It is an environmental museum. It has an institutional mandate to acquaint visitors with the role of plants in the urban environment and over time. No other garden in Southern California boasts the natural features and history of land use like The Arboretum, nor the planned layout by geography and taxonomy of plant collections chosen from around the world for their adaptability to our semi-arid climate.

Judith Morse
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