URBAN TYPOLOGY:

Reprogramming Exposition Park into an Inner-City Haven

Nicole Corsaro
Exposition Park is located in Los Angeles with its main wayfinding points being the Harbor 110 Freeway and the southern most point of the USC campus. At 160 acres of land this park began with 3 museums and a sunken garden. It currently has 8 venues with the main attractions being the Natural History Museum, the Memorial Coliseum, Rose Garden and Science Center.

This site is a center for annual summer concerts, film festivals, 5ks, and swap meets. Each of the venues expects millions of visitors annually. It is a place I have visited weekend after weekend and have wished received more attention.

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This Concept combines the goals of multifunctionality, energy and water efficiency with the context of Exposition Park. Every space is taken advantage of with layers of use and energy conservation with the most efficient techniques to return water to the ground.
The above map indicates the four main areas that will transform Exposition Park to a safer, modern, more community oriented museum park that meets the needs of the current Los Angeles county resident. While energy and water efficiency were not a main concern upon the park’s creation a renovation of this park needs to activate modern principles for saving water and energy.
Bicyclists, pedestrians, and those taking public transportation come secondary to those in personal vehicles currently. Exposition Park should cater not only to those who visit for a day, but the people who are within walking and biking distance of the park. These people deserve the proper amenities to conveniently visit the park.
Parking lots surrounding Exposition Park go unused most months of the year. The community could use this underutilized space for community gatherings and sports/recreation. By stacking sports fields and community gathering spaces above the existing expanses of parking, over 1 million square feet of asphalt will become functional for visitors and the surrounding neighborhoods throughout the year.
Weekly swap meets, monthly 5k runs, and fundraisers for the Science Center and Natural History Museum will have a designated space.
An exhibit on California native planting at the Natural History Museum has been successful in introducing the public to the idea of the ideal water saving plant. The back of the museum beyond this exhibit is a large expanse of lawn often used for tailgating but has no connection to the learning going on at the museum.
Gathering spaces near the museum should continue the plant palette embedded into the museum as well as cater to the tailgating crowd during the fall football season. Turf grasses should be functional as a spot for cars and education. Visitors can compare native to non-native grasses throughout the year by color.
The Exposition Park Rose Garden is a historical site open to the public throughout the year. There are over 200 varieties of roses in the sunken garden making it a great backdrop for photos and films throughout the decades. The issues with this space are the lack of seating and proper lighting, safety concerns, and large water consumption.
The introduction of uplighting within the planting beds would be ideal for night viewing and increase the comfort of nighttime visitors. These lights would be placed in surrounding planters of the garden as well. They are currently an unorganized mix of tropical, native, and mediterranean. There is no historical basis to these plantings and with a change to the historically based California native plants could reduce water as well.
There is not enough shade or places to sit in the Rose Garden currently. Visitors often sit on the damp grass since the four pergolas on site are usually taken. Eight pergolas and moveable seating would severely increase the amount of visitors who would want to stay in this part of the park.
The California Science Center alone expects millions of visitors annually. What the museum landscape lacks is a comfortable place for visitors to linger. The traffic of people moving from parking structure to museum is steady but not many stop for long.
There is no place for kids to run and play or for parents to sit. No one can stop for long to admire the outdoor plane display propped up near the parking structure. This proposed plan introduces gathering points for visitors so they may enjoy their museum experience longer.