

Daily Breeze - Torrance, Calif.

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Government time is like dog years.

I'm sure you've heard that one human year equals seven dog years. Most bureaucratic entities are like that, only backward.

For instance, if the city tells you something will take a year to accomplish, figure it will actually be three years (unless they're in a hurry, and then it's only two). The school district ratio is about five years for every real year.

In the case of the Port of Los Angeles, it's pretty much forever. That's why I don't worry too much about the promenade ever being finished or a new cruise ship terminal being built at the south end of town.

Occasionally, though, somebody forgets to turn back the clock and things move forward.

After more than three decades, Angels Gate Park and Angels Gate Cultural Center will be getting a master plan. Thanks to the efforts of the cultural center's executive director, Nathan Birnbaum, and master plan steering committee chairwoman Juliann Wolfgram, work is under way to develop a road map to the future.

Recently, the city approved a 30-year lease for Angels Gate Cultural Center. Creating a master plan for the center is a condition of the lease.

The long-term agreement also provides stability that funding organizations look for when making decisions about giving grants.

It also made sense to establish a master plan for the entire park at the same time. This ensures compatibility between the plans and saves taxpayers money. A novel concept in Los Angeles, but one I encourage. The California Cultural and Historical Endowment provided funds for the cultural center plan. Money to plan the rest of Angels Gate came from a variety of sources, including the Ralph M. Parsons and James Irvine foundations. The Coastal and Central San Pedro neighborhood councils and a number of individuals also contributed.

A steering committee of community activists and city officials is leading the effort to get a plan written and submitted by Labor Day (less than five months from now). That's about a week in government time.

Here's where you come in. The first of three public meetings will be held next Saturday, April 21, at Angels Gate Cultural Center. From 10 a.m. to noon, you and your neighbors will have the chance to weigh in on what you want at Angels Gate.

Suggestions have included a theater, cafe or restaurant, gardens, and more (or less) open space. Do you want to maintain the status quo or get outside the box? Are you a proponent of passive parks or an advocate for

activity?

Regardless of what you think, the committee needs to hear your opinion. It's about time something was done about Angels Gate's aging infrastructure and haphazard arrangement. We're only about 30 years behind schedule.

School's in -- or not

Almost 10 months ago (practically yesterday), representatives of the Los Angeles Unified School District hosted a public meeting to talk about South Region High School No. 14. That's the new facility proposed for Western Avenue across from Green Hills cemetery.

It's intended to accommodate 2,000 students from the San Pedro and Narbonne attendance areas.

Despite opposition from neighbors, the district plans to build the school, scheduled to open in 2012.

Both candidates for the LAUSD District 7 board seat don't want a new 2,000-seat high school. They propose smaller alternatives, which would involve placing somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 students at Angels Gate. Once again, district officials want to hear from the community.

They will be holding a meeting at 6 p.m. Thursday at the San Pedro High School auditorium to review the status of the project. Go and tell them what you want.

Voters have approved billions of dollars in bond money for LAUSD. That's money coming out of your pocket. No matter how you feel about a new high school, the children of San Pedro deserve to get their fair share.

It's not just the big stuff

About a year ago, Ray Patricio showed up at the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council meeting to complain about not having a place to rest when he walked out to the fishing pier at Cabrillo Beach.

At the next meeting, the council voted to buy some benches.

Simple, right?

Not quite. Apparently, it's virtually impossible to give something to a city department. There seems to be a mountain of paperwork and liability issues. I won't go into details, but 10 months later, we finally got the benches in place at the pier.

The Coastal council's secretary, Bruce Horton, doggedly pursued the bureaucrats and deserves the credit for getting Ray Patricio a place to sit down and take in the view.

If you have a good idea for your neighborhood council, talk to them right now. It might be a dog's age before it gets done.

Doug Epperhart is a member of the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council. He writes a biweekly column for More San Pedro. He can be reached at dougepperhart@cox.net. moreVIEWSmoreVIEWS

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Abstract (Document Summary)

After more than three decades, Angels Gate Park and Angels Gate Cultural Center will be getting a master plan. Thanks to the efforts of the cultural center's executive director, Nathan Birnbaum, and master plan steering committee chairwoman Juliann Wolfgram, work is under way to develop a road map to the future.

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