

# Southern California Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects 2016 Quality of Life Design Awards – Historic Preservation and Restoration Design

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## **Project Identity and Location:**

The Pacific Electric Trail travels more than six miles through the city of Rancho Cucamonga California. Beginning at the bordering cross street of Grove Avenue in Upland and traversing the City through to Fontana, it utilizes the original Pacific Electric Railway easement as it connects with major street and community destinations along the route. The **Trailhead Park** sits approximately ¼ mile in from the start of the trail alongside the current configuration of Historic Route 66 (Foothill Boulevard). Situated at the base of Red Hill, it is in close proximity to the site of the first homestead in Rancho Cucamonga and has both historic and transportation interest and value for the community.

## **Purpose of Project:**

Creating a historically themed trailhead utilizing the legacy of the site at the onset of the Pacific Electric Trail within the City and the location of the original "Mother Vineyard," providing a safe and accessible entry for pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trail users, along with connection to the larger regional non-motorized, multi-use commuter and recreational trail system. The project supports the City's 'Healthy' goals, providing local historical enrichment alongside a sustainable and nurturing destination.

## **Role of the Landscape Architect:**

The landscape architect was chosen for the project team to work closely with the City, Public Agencies, and the Civil Engineer to create the trailhead park as well as the typical design for the crossings and trails along the entire route through the City. Design elements for the trailhead park included historic and educational elements as well as plant selection, site furnishings, lighting, hardscape, parking and entry strategies, along with accessibility for equestrian, bicycle and pedestrians. Unique to this park is a portion of the Original 165 ton historic iron clad rail bridge that crossed over Route 66 was relocated at the western edge of the park, situated within the park as a dramatic visual point of interest. In addition to a low water/low maintenance native and drought tolerant landscape design, the park, first planted by 19th Century homesteaders. A found section of the original Route 66 macadam road surface has been preserved and incorporated into the design to further underscore the significance of the original road and the historic place of the site. Another unique historic aspect was the preservation of an established Eucalyptus windrow. The site's historic place is accented with cast concrete pavement panels recalling dates of local significance, beginning with the original settlement and continuing to the founding of modern day Rancho Cucamonga.

## **Significance:**

Situated at the crossroads of two major and important historic transit routes – the Pacific Electric Railway and the Historic Route 66, the trailhead site was designed to restore and re-purpose the existing elements of historic value, while creating a contemporary accessible entry point for bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian users. The three access points to the trail above include stairs, an ADA accessible pedestrian ramp and a decomposed granite equestrian trail. The park reinforces the City's Healthy RC goals to foster healthy minds (education and local history), healthy bodies (recreational trail) and clean and sustainable environment (non-motorized environmentally sound commuting option, low water use landscape design). In addition to its historic significance, the trail moves eastward to bisect the core of the city, to connecting users to adjacent parks and community centers, retail and commercial destinations.

## **Special Factors:**

The location, adjacent to the historic bridge to the Trailhead Park, the topography and linear nature of the site posed several design challenges. A 30° slope ascending up to the trail called for an attractive and navigable maze of ramps to allow access to trail users of all types and physical abilities. Located along a busy highway, vehicle, pedestrian and equestrian safety in the design of the entry and exit patterns was key. Parking needed to accommodate equestrian trailers as well as regular vehicle traffic, and entry from the high-speed roadway had to be swift and effective. The City desired a safe destination that was achieved by utilizing CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles - keeping eyes on the park with unobstructed views and low height planting, removing areas that stand as attractive nuisances, and creating easy access for police surveillance.

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## Image Summary – Route 66 Trailhead Park



Image 66-1

This overall conceptual plan shows the linear nature of the park and the placement of proposed historic preservation amenities including the original ironclad bridge that crossed Route 66, a recreation of the “Mother Vineyard,” preservation of the Eucalyptus windrow, and the original macadam surface section of the original “Mother Road.”



Image 66-2

Next to the original relocated section of the original iron clad bridge stands a legacy vineyard, originally planted in the 19th century, at the very spot of the “Mother Vineyard” that gave rise to the now famous Cucamonga AVA. Cucamonga became a major wine producing area and to this day, is a nationally recognized AVA wine growing region.



Image 66-3

Wine-making informs many of the cultural aspects of the City. Cuttings of Mission Grapes, the original genus of the “Mother Vineyard”, were sourced from the horticulture department at UC Davis and planted at their approximate original location.



Image 66-4

A portion of the original historic ironclad railroad bridge from 1929 has been relocated on site. Placement of the bridge section utilized CPTED principals to create eyes on the space and eliminating visual blind spots.



Image 66-5

A portion of actual Pacific Electric Line iron rails, were used in the simulated tracks leading to the names of the original Red Line stops set into the adjoined monument wall. Landscape architect coordinated the historical research for the entire site and designed all the interpretive panels, monuments and other elements throughout the park.



Image 66-6

Shown is a small portion of the original macadam pavement from the “Mother Road,” retained in the park design and serving as a reminder of the historical significance of the fabled Route 66. Shown also is the preserved Eucalyptus windrow.



Image 66-7

A low maintenance, low water use native and drought tolerant plant palette was used along with locally sourced boulder accents. As part of the CPTED approach to deterring crime, low growing plants aid in keeping “eyes on” surveillance of the park adding to the safety.



Image 66-8

Entry to park from the major high speed roadway, is facilitated with a well marked entry monument, ease of ingress drive and a wide turn radius to accommodate equestrian trailers. Exit is equally accessible and is facilitated by traffic signal on Foothill Boulevard.



Image 66-9

With nearly a 30° rise to the trail, along with the need for pedestrian, ADA and equestrian access, a complex yet accessible series of ramps and stairways, were designed for users of all physical abilities and requirements.



Image 66-10

Cast concrete historical markers are set into the exterior walkway, highlighting major dates in Rancho Cucamonga history. Included are such markers as President Lincoln authorizing the first post office which was located at the site, and concluding with one marking the City’s incorporation date in 1977.