



**CHICANO PARK STEERING COMMITTEE**  
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# CHICANO PARK

1970—2010 [www.chicano-park.org](http://www.chicano-park.org)

*Chicano Park was founded on April 22, 1970 when the community of Barrio Logan and Chicano activists joined forces to protest the construction of a Highway Patrol station on the present site of the park. The station was the final insult to a neighborhood that had already been degraded by the demolition of hundreds of homes to make way for Interstate 5 and the Coronado bridge, by the placement of toxic industries and junkyards allowed by rezoning laws, and the lack of community facilities, proper schools, sufficient employment opportunities, and social and medical services.*

*Protesters led by the Brown Berets, community activists, artists, M.E.Ch.A. and others took over the site and faced police and bulldozers for days while negotiations took place that resulted in the land being given over for a community park. In the following months, similar actions by the same groups led to the forming of a Chicano Free Clinic, now the Logan Heights Family Health Center, and the Centro Cultural de la Raza in Balboa Park.*

*The struggle for Chicano Park came to symbolize the struggle for self-determination and self-empowerment. The park's murals painted by Chicano artists such as Victor Orozco Ochoa, Mario Torero, Salvador Torres, José Montoya, Sal Barajas and many others portray the social, political and cultural issues that form the struggle for the liberation of Chicano Mexicanos.*



## What is the Chicano Park Steering Committee (CPSC)?

The Chicano Park Steering Committee (CPSC) is a grassroots organization comprised of individuals who volunteer their time and energy to ensure that the original stated goals for the development and expansion of Chicano Park “all the way to the bay” are never forgotten or abandoned. No one ever dreamed it would take nearly four decades to get where we are and there is still a lot of work ahead.

When we established the CPSC in April of 1970, our objective was, “To oversee (on behalf of the community) the continuing development and expansion of the Chicano Park and to ensure that the park would be developed in a Chicano/ Mexicano/Indigenous style.” One original goal was to transform the cold grey concrete and rock-hard dirt that once dominated the site into a glorious place that would mirror and showcase the beauty, culture and spirit of the Chicano people. Today the murals in Chicano Park are world-famous and constitute (along with various sculptures and Zapata statue) the world’s largest outdoor art gallery.



CPSC spearheaded the community’s campaign to prevent damage and/or destruction of the murals during the seismic retrofit project to reinforce the bridge supports in the event of an earthquake. Caltrans initially announced that some murals would be damaged or destroyed in the retrofitting process. Community outrage was rampant and it was made clear that we would never allow such a thing to happen. Caltrans sent their engineers back to the drawing board and they in turn concluded that the retrofit project could be completed via a different process that would not disturb the murals.

In 1999, Caltrans District 11 in San Diego, in concert with the Chicano Park Steering Committee, applied for a \$1.6 million federal grant to restore the murals in Chicano Park. Marty Rosen of Caltrans guided the grant application process. In 2002, Caltrans finally heard that they had been awarded the grant. In 2004, Caltrans submitted the first draft of the Scope of Work (SOW) for the Field Director position for review and approval by Caltrans’ office in Sacramento.

In December 2006, artists Sal Barajas and Victor Ochoa completed the *Chicano Park Mural Restoration Manual*. This manual will help guide the artists through the restoration process. In early 2008, Caltrans received notice that the SOW was approved by the Contracts and Legal Division. The next step is review and approval of the SOW by the Dept. of General Services (DGS) of California, which administers the contracts that are not highway construction project. Obviously, the entire process has been excruciatingly slow, almost painful for those who have been the most involved.

By now it should be apparent that the CPSC is a vibrant and seasoned non-funded community organization intricately involved with community issues and is here to stay. We also find time to organize and present the annual Chicano Park Day celebrations. Most CPSC members have jobs and families and that makes their dedication to Chicano Park even more special. Take a look around the park today. All that you see represents the fruits of our labor for the past 40 years. There is still more to come and we will be leading the fight to get it done. The Chicano Park Steering Committee: a group of people who dare to share a dream and work to make that dream become a reality.

