



GSGLA PROPERTY STRATEGIC PLANNING TASKFORCE: “VOICES TO VISION”

“For girls to have places to participate in the Girl Scout experience”

Final Recommendations to the Board of Directors, July 26, 2014
as amended January 7, 2015

I Introduction

1. Properties owned/leased by GSGLA were ‘inherited’ through the merger of the legacy councils in 2008 resulting in many properties in certain geographic areas and none in others.
2. The Taskforce met initially in March 2013, and its mission is to align properties, program and membership in a fiscally responsible manner in order to fulfill the Girl Scout mission to inspire and empower girls and young women.
3. The Taskforce’s goal was to undertake a data driven process so that the ultimate recommendations would be clear and evidenced by extensive information and data in which all stakeholders can have confidence.
4. The Taskforce’s charge is completed upon the Board’s approval of the recommendations. It is beyond the Taskforce’s scope to provide communication about and implementation of the recommendations. It is also beyond the Taskforce’s scope to provide specific cost estimates for those recommendations the Board may decide to implement.
5. The process was intended to be as transparent as possible and to solicit and act on member input at all decision points, hence the name “Voices to Vision.” Members have been provided multiple ways and opportunities to provide input including 6 town halls, a market survey, focus groups, individual interviews, survey at Girltopia 2013, Service Unit outreach, a webinar for the market research findings, the 2014 Annual Meeting, the criteria survey; and the dedicated email box. Substantial information is posted and available on the GSGLA website.
6. Recommendations are aspirational in that they are intended to provide the best experience for girls in order to meet our vision statement “For girls to have places to participate in the Girl Scout experience” and are dependent on adequate funding being available for their implementation.
7. Recommendations are intended to be phased in over a multi-year implementation period.
8. The recommendations follow an 18-month process that included numerous meetings, multiple decision points and the compilation and analysis of extensive data. We bring to your attention that the Taskforce unanimously approved these recommendations.
9. In our process, additional considerations arose from the market research data that are not property related. We have included a section detailing those considerations at the end of this report.

10. The information we have compiled includes extensive data that details the costs and revenue for each property, the usage, and general estimates of what the cost would be to ensure that each property meets the Criteria the Taskforce developed and announced at the 2014 Annual Meeting and attached as an appendix (the “Criteria”). We believe all this information will help guide the Board as it adopts an implementation plan.
11. Based on the process, research, and all related considerations, the recommendations categorize each property under one of the following three classifications:
 - **Retain**, in which the intention for the property is continued use, maintenance, and ownership/lease responsibility of the council;
 - **Retire**, in which the intention for the property is to make plans to end all use, maintenance, and ownership/lease of the property, and remove it from active service and responsibility of the council; and
 - **Review**, in which the intention for the property is additional review and further examination to reevaluate the property and its usage, and determine if there are any feasible opportunities for funding or transferring ownership in order to better determine the proceedings for the retention or retirement of the property.

II Program Center Recommendations

GSGLA has 10 program centers. The Taskforce determined key criteria for performance of the program centers based upon the Girl Scout mission and vision statement. We recommend that all program centers, whether part of the current portfolio, or to be acquired in the future, provide the opportunity for overnight camping as well as the other recommended program enhancements. Camping and outdoor adventure is a key component of the Girl Scout experience and if available at program centers will provide younger girls a chance to have an initial camping experience and better enable them to be ready to have longer and larger scale experiences. In addition to safety, members say it is important that traditional Girl Scout experiences be available at each property, including ‘bridging’ ceremonies and camp fire circles.

Although any review of service centers is beyond our scope, we also recommend that future service centers and program centers be combined along the model of El Ranchito, which members tell us is a model that they prefer. The recommendations are intended to maximize program service opportunities and meet the vision and the Criteria.

1. We recommend retention of the following program centers—two of which are owned by GSGLA and two that are leased—that are all well-equipped, well-used, have a high level of user satisfaction and are most closely aligned with the Criteria. We also recommend that program enhancements be made to each of these program centers. This includes, to the extent practicable, indoor and outdoor cooking facilities, and better or additional overnight camping facilities, including restrooms and showers. To the extent feasible we suggest that parking capacity be increased.
 - **Camp Mariposa:** We suggest program enhancements that might include a low ropes course, archery range and splash pad.
 - **El Ranchito:** We suggest adding more program shelters.

- **Marine Landing:** We suggest better communication about the parking available in the general marina. Also, we recommend enhanced signage; safety concerns can be assuaged by signage for ‘Marine Landing,’ which does not require inclusion of Girl Scout branding.
 - **Montrose Program Center:** We suggest exploring installation of a climbing tower.
2. We also recommend retaining **Johnstone Program Center**. We recognize that significant improvements will be necessary, including addressing safety and security issues on the site. We believe that of all the existing program centers in the general geographic area, Johnstone provides the greatest potential to offer the program enhancements the girls have told us they want, including an outdoor adventure component. Given our recommendations below to retire properties in the general geographic area where Johnstone is located, we recommend that Johnstone be retained and improved to provide needed program space in the eastern part of the GSGLA footprint.
 3. We recommend reviewing the following program centers, which are leased by GSGLA from governmental entities for minimal rental. The review will be for the purpose of determining the feasibility and interest in transferring the leases to a foundation or other nonprofit. This could emulate the Hill-Harison House model, which is now operated by a local foundation and used by Girl Scouts. Although the lease payments for these properties are minimal, the properties still require considerable capital improvements and continued maintenance and have safety and liability concerns. These properties are located in public parks, have few amenities, limited use and low user satisfaction. If a transfer is not feasible, we recommend terminating the leases and retiring these properties.
 - **Covina Program Center**
 - **San Gabriel Program Center**
 - **Whittier Program Center**
 4. We recommend reviewing the following owned program centers for the purpose of determining the feasibility of securing external funding or transferring ownership to a foundation or nonprofit to undertake the ownership and operation for these properties for continued use by GSGLA:
 - **Chino Program Center**
 - **La Casita Program Center**
 5. We recommend acquiring new program space in geographic areas where large numbers of members live without access to GSGLA properties. Our analysis supports providing new space to align geographically with current and potential members in the following priority:
 1. The 110 Corridor including the L.A. city center and the 110/105 interchange
 2. North San Fernando Valley (in areas such as Reseda, Sun Valley, Canoga Park, North Hollywood, San Fernando)
 3. South Bay (in areas such as Gardena, Torrance, Inglewood, El Segundo)
 4. Santa Clarita/Palmdale/Lancaster

III Camp Recommendations

We are delighted to report that current girl members, like their mothers and grandmothers, value camping and outdoor adventure as a key component of the Girl Scout experience. Our

recommendations for the camps are intended to signal GSGLA's continued commitment to this value. However, GSGLA has more camp properties than is fiscally responsible, and maintenance of these properties, including responsiveness to safety concerns— which is the most important criteria to our members— has a high cost that consumes a disproportionate percentage of the Council's resources.

Although none of the camps squarely meet all of the Criteria, we were guided in large measure by each camp's potential to provide the programs and amenities that girls of all ages want, while embracing the traditional Girl Scout camp experience. Our girls told us that they don't need deluxe facilities. So, although we are recommending various program enhancements, we are not suggesting that anything needs to be luxurious. Camps, however, do need to be accessible from a geographic and seasonal standpoint and offer programming that both challenges and mentors our girls.

1. We recommend retention of **Camp Lakota**. Camp Lakota most closely meets or has the potential to meet all the Criteria. Lakota is available and easily accessible year round for troop and service unit camping as well as residential camp. Lakota is generally safe and has basic infrastructure including emergency communication. Lakota can accommodate a variety of sleeping options desired by the girls. It can be configured to accommodate highly desirable program activities such as horseback riding, ropes course skills, zip lining and archery. We recommend that the stable and riding ring be renovated. We also recommend that the new dining hall/lodge include a large commercial kitchen where girls can enjoy cooking. Other recommended renovations include restroom and shower improvements and pool resurfacing.
2. We recommend continued operation of **Camp Osito Rancho**, pending further review and analysis. Although Osito has provided residential camping for GSGLA, it presents a number of challenges including distance from our members, lack of availability for much of the year and poor ingress and egress.
3. We recommend reviewing **Skyland Ranch** for the purpose of determining the feasibility of securing external funding or transferring ownership to a foundation or nonprofit to undertake the ownership and operation of Skyland as a camp for continued use by GSGLA.
4. We recommend that **El Potrero** be retired. El Potrero is the camp least aligned with the Criteria and with extremely limited potential to meet the Criteria in the future.

IV Additional Considerations Regarding the Recommendations

The most important message— which we heard loud and clear— is that girls crave the opportunity for outdoor experiences.

We respect and admire the passion some of our members have brought to this process. Their voices were heard throughout this process, and a number of their suggestions have already been implemented, such as better promotion and description of the properties.

We urge that any implementation of the recommendations include honoring legacy properties, the girls (now women and some no longer with us) who define their Girl Scout experience by their adventures at those properties, as well as the donors who made those experiences possible.

Our recommendations contemplate a multi-year implementation since all of this cannot occur instantaneously and, we reiterate that without adequate funding, recommendations may ultimately not be implemented.

V Additional Considerations Arising from the Taskforce Process

The most pressing barriers to both camp and program center usage are **lack of awareness** and **distance**. We recommend consideration of the following actions based on knowledge gained during the Taskforce process:

- Better market the council properties and their amenities. Enhanced branding could go a long way in promoting camping/outdoor experiences and increasing usage of council properties.
- Create a committee comprised of adult volunteers, older girls and staff to revamp communications at every level of the council.
- Develop a robust volunteer corps organized to assist with or undertake property upgrades and maintenance.

APPENDIX - PROPERTY CRITERIA

Program Centers

Safety & Compliance (with policies and regulations). Comply with legal requirements, including ADA, and meet basic health and safety standards throughout, including kitchens, bathrooms, and entry ways.

Cost-effectiveness & Affordability. A reasonable cost to acquire, improve and bring up to code, and operate, which will result in reasonable costs for member use. Costs are intertwined and include capital investments, operating costs, and costs to cure (when upgrades are needed) and cannot be assessed independently.

Accessibility. Reasonably close to members and potential members and, depending on community needs, close to mass transit.

Multi-functional Activities. Appeal to Girl Scouts of all program levels, honor Girl Scout traditions, and support a variety of program activities, offering at least one or two signature programs at each site.

Capacity for Utilization. Used, or have the potential to be used, by a sufficient number of Girl Scouts to justify resources being used to operate, maintain or develop the site.

Infrastructure. Meet basic infrastructure needs.

Camps

Safety & Compliance (with policies and regulations). Comply with legal requirements, including ADA, and meet basic health and safety standards throughout, including kitchens, baths, and entry ways, and satisfy accreditation requirements as appropriate.

Cost-effectiveness & Affordability. Have a reasonable cost to acquire, improve and bring up to code, and operate, which will result in reasonable costs for member use. Costs are intertwined and include capital investments, operating costs, and costs to cure (when upgrades are needed) and cannot be assessed independently.

Accessibility. Accessible year round, have ease of access into and exiting the camp, and be reasonably close to members and potential members.

Multi-functional Activities. Appeal to Girl Scouts of all program levels, honor Girl Scout traditions, and support a variety of program activities, offering at least three to four signature programs at each camp.

Capacity for Utilization. Used or have the potential to be used by a sufficient number of Girl Scouts with a variety of camping options and ability to accommodate a range of group sizes to justify resources being used to operate, maintain or develop the site.

Infrastructure. Meet basic infrastructure needs.