



## City takes step toward Papago facelift

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Phoenix has taken its first steps toward developing a "new vision" for Papago Park, those attending a luncheon this week were told. But how long it will take, how much it will cost and how the park will look when all is said and done remain a source of conflict.

The Phoenix Parks Board decided last week to start forming two committees - one of government officials and the other of city staffs and park stakeholders - to further the process, Phoenix Zoo director Jeff Williamson told a Valley Forward luncheon.

"This is an unprecedented opportunity," said Nan Ellin, director of Urban and Metropolitan Studies at Arizona State University, who moderated a panel discussion that featured attorney Grady Gammage Jr. and Scottsdale City Councilwoman Betty Drake.

Gammage, who participated in an Urban Land Institute proposal for the 1,200-acre park, said the vision is for the park to become "a default place to go and hang out on a Sunday afternoon."

"Phoenix does not have a grand, multiuse, multi-attraction park," he said. "The closest is Papago Park," home of the zoo, Desert Botanical Garden, two golf courses, the Arizona Historical Society Museum and numerous lakes and picnic areas.

Williamson said 2 million people a year visit the park, but "it lacks a comprehensive unity, which we think is important."

Drake said connecting the various areas of the park together is a key, making access easier.

Funding mechanisms also need to be explored, Gammage and Williamson said. Money from the Arizona Centennial Commission could become available, tax options are possible, a bond issue might be forthcoming, and other possibilities exist.