

**Recommended City Council Responses to Facts, Findings and Recommendations  
in Grand Jury Report “Fox Canyon and Wightman Street:  
A Tale of Two City Parks in Extremis”**

**GRAND JURY FACTS**

*Fact: The Fox Canyon area south of University Avenue is short 22 acres of park space.*

**Mayor’s Response:** Based on SANDAG 2007 figures, the Mid-City Community Planning area is deficient 86.70 gross acres and 137.32 useable acres of parkland. However, 11.56 useable acres are either under construction or recently acquired which reduce the deficit to 125.76.

The City does not estimate or allocate park acreage on a neighborhood basis within a Specific Community Planning area.

The City did not establish the 22-acre park deficient number for the Fox Canyon neighborhood area.

**IBA Recommendation: Join the Mayor’s Response.**

**GRAND JURY FINDINGS (Numbered in sequential order)**

*Finding 1*

**The proposed Fox Canyon Park and Wightman Street Park would contribute greatly to a park-starved neighborhood.**

**Mayor’s Response:** The Mayor agrees with this finding.

**IBA Recommendation: Join the Mayor’s Response.**

*Finding 2*

**The City of San Diego has good preliminary plans to build a park in Fox Canyon.**

**Mayor’s Response:** The City has a conceptual plan for a potential park on the property proposed for acquisition at the time the plan was developed, but a final approved General Development Plan via City Council Policy 300-33 would be required. The City of San Diego does not own the property titled “Fox Canyon Park”.

**IBA Recommendation: Join the Mayor’s Response.**

*Finding 3*

**Tax increment funds and/or Development Impact Fees could be used to pay for a simple park at Wightman Street.**

**Mayor's Response:** The Mayor agrees with this finding. Tax increment funds and/or Development Impact Fees could be used to develop Wightman Street Neighborhood Park as well as other potential park sites in the general vicinity, including the property known as "Fox Canyon."

**IBA Recommendation: Join the Mayor's Response.**

*Finding 4*

**The proposed park appears to be the best use of the vacant land in Fox Canyon.**

**Mayor's Response:** The Mayor agrees with the finding. However, it does not appear the entire site known as "Fox Canyon" could be constructed into a "developed" park due to the site constraints. The city does not own the property and as such there is no opportunity to develop the site at this time.

**IBA Recommendation: Join the Mayor's Response.**

**GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 08-60:** Immediately bring the different departments of the City involved in this matter to come to decision, prior to losing the opportunity to use State grant monies whether to purchase the Fox Canyon park tract and begin constructing a park there or return the state grant funds and disencumber the properties.

**Mayor's Response:** This recommendation has been implemented.

**IBA Recommendation: Join the Mayor's Response.**

**Recommendation 08-61:** If the decision is to not construct a park on the Fox Canyon tract, bring the same departments of the City together to evaluate whether funds are available and should be used to construct a park at Wightman Street.

**Mayor's Response:** Implemented. On March 27, 2007 the City Council gave direction to City staff to 1) transfer the funding allocated for Fox Canyon to the Wightman Street Neighborhood Park; and 2) the approval for the Mayor, or his representative, to request approval from the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation to amend the project location of the grant contract to the Wightman Street Neighborhood Park.

**IBA Recommendation: Join the Mayor's Response, and supplement with the following:**

Over the past year, the City has undertaken a public process to complete the design of the Wightman Street Neighborhood Park, applied for necessary permits, and initiated the environmental review. On July 29, 2008, the City made the environmental determination of mitigated negative declaration (MND) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and stated that an environmental impact report would not be required. In response to the Notice of Right to Appeal Environmental Determination dated July 31, 2008, the City received an appeal.

Prior to the receipt of the appeal, the City intended to resubmit the grant proposal to the State to request the transfer of grant funds to the Wightman Street location in August 2008. If the transfer request is approved, the start of construction is planned for August 2009, with project completion to occur in March 2010. However, the appeal process is likely to delay this schedule. The City Council will consider the appeal at its meeting of September 16, 2008.

**Recommendation 08-62: Decide whether to build a road in Fox Canyon.**

**Mayor's Response:** This requires further analysis. Should the City be successful in acquiring property to build a park at the "Fox Canyon" site, a traffic study will be required to determine if the street is necessary to provide adequate access to the new park. If the traffic study determines that a road is needed, it will be built in conjunction with the site's development of a park. If a road is not needed for access for the park, it will remain in its current status as a paper street only.

**IBA Recommendation: Join the Mayor's Response.**