

# Community Planners Committee

Planning Department • City of San Diego  
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## **CPC DRAFT MINUTES FOR MEETING OF JUNE 30, 2020**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Eric Edelman, Carmel Mtn. Rnch (CMRSS)	Michele Addington, Mission Valley (MV)
Russ Connelly, City Heights (CH)	Tim Taylor, North Park (NP)
Nicholas Reed, Clairemont (CLMT)	Andrea Schlageter, Ocean Beach (OB)
Jose Reynoso, College Area (COL)	Mark Freed, Otay Mesa (OM)
Bob Link, Downtown (DWNTN)	Jason Legros, Pacific Beach (PB)
Linda Godoy, Eastern (EAS)	Vicki Touchstone, Rancho Bernardo (RB)
Kathy Vandenheuvel, Golden Hill (GH)	Randy Steffler, Rancho Penasquitos (RP)
Deborah Sharpe, Ken/Tal (KT)	Marc Lindshield, San Pasqual/Lake Hodges (SP/LH)
Diane Kane, La Jolla (LJ)	Wally Wulfeck, Scripps Ranch (SR)
Howard Wayne, Linda Vista, (LV)	Myron Taylor, Southeastern (SE)
Dike Aniywo, Midway, (MW)	Brad Remy, Torrey Pines (TP)
Jeff Stevens, Mira Mesa (MM)	Chris Nielsen, University (UN)
Debbie Watkins, Mission Beach (MB)	
Lorayne Burley, Miramar Ranch North (MRN)	

**VOTING INELIGIBILITY/RECUSALS:** Barrio Logan, Carmel Mountain Ranch, Del Mar Mesa, Downtown, Kearny Mesa, Navajo, Normal Heights, Otay Mesa Nestor, Peninsula, San Ysidro, Torrey Hills, Uptown.

**Guests:** Councilmember Barbara Bry, Robin Kaufman, Laura Black, Ester Berry, Debra Sharpe, David Moty, Tom Mullaney

**City Staff/Representatives:** Tony Kempton

**NOTE:** *The sign-in sheets provided at the entrance to the meeting are used to list CPC Representatives, guest speakers, and staff present at the meeting.*

### **1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS:**

Chair Wally Wulfeck called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Roll Call: CMRSS, CH, CLMT, COL DWNTN, GH, KT, LJ, LV, MM, MRN, MV, MW, NP, OT, OB, PB, RB, RP, SP/LH, SR, SE, TP, UN.

### **2. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT:** 2 minutes per issue.

None

**3. MODIFICATIONS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Approved without modification.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF MAY 26, 2020.**

Ayes: CH, CLMT, COL, KT, MM, MRN, MV, NP, OT, OB, PB, RB, RP, SP/LH, SR, SM, SE, TIRSN, TP, UN. Nays: 0, Abstain: CMRSS, DWNTN, GH, LJ, LV, MW. Minutes approved: 20-0-6

**5. COMPLETE COMMUNITIES: PLAY EVERYWHERE - PARKS MASTER PLAN AND GENERAL PLAN RECREATION ELEMENT AMENDMENT (Action Item) – 45 mins.**

Report from the Subcommittee. Discussion of CPC position.

<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/completemunities/play-everywhere>

**Board Comment:**

- An overriding concern was over the point system proposed to evaluate parks. Many thought this was inadequate as a means of evaluating recreational facilities. Members expressed dissatisfaction with having improvements such as a swing or bench equaling the addition of acreage and that a half-acre park with a tot-lot added could equal the recreational value of a much larger park.
- There was mixed reaction to the proposals regarding recreational value for open space.
- Most members felt the program was being rushed through the process without having reached out to those that would be most affected by the proposed program. Members wanted consideration of the program by the City delayed so it could be properly vetted.

**Motion:**

Move to oppose (GH), second (LV). CPC opposes the Parks Master Plan component of Complete Communities, because of serious limitations with the draft plan.

CPC requests that the City Council not docket this component of Complete Communities for Council consideration, but allow time for city staff to make needed changes, for Community Planning Groups and other stakeholders to review the Parks Master Plan component of Complete Communities plan, and to review the revisions made to date.

**OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The CPC has determined that the Draft Parks Master Plan and Draft Recreation Element Amendment have many serious shortcomings and does not support the documents in their current forms.

The CPC supports the revisions recommended by the Planning Commission on June 18, 2020 and strongly recommends they be incorporated into the proposed policy documents, as well as the following recommendations before the policy documents are presented to the City Council.

The City Staff Report noted that the Planning Department has not consulted any Community Planning Groups or any of the local Recreation Advisory Groups (formerly called Recreation Councils); Nor has adequate time been allowed for meaningful public review. In the past, proposed and revised public policy documents of this magnitude have involved significant public input and participation.

1. **Public Review.** Delay the approval process for this item until Community Planning Groups, the CPC, and Recreation Advisory Groups can make their recommendations. The Planning Department should incorporate changes to the proposed Parks Master Plan and Recreation Element Amendment as recommended by the Planning Commission on June 18, 2020, and other public comments, and recirculate the documents for public review 14-days prior to decision-makers' consideration.
2. **Recreation Element.** Clearly state in the amended Recreation Element the City's commitment to achieving the goals of the Parks Master Plan, by revising RE-A.8, as follows: "~~Strive to~~ Fully implement and achieve the park standards identified in the Parks Master Plan, including land acquisition."

Retain the neighborhood and community emphasis in the Recreational Opportunities Goals, Page RE-22, regarding the provisions of a diverse range of recreational opportunities, by reinstating the deleted text as follows: "A City with a diverse range of active and passive recreational opportunities that meet the needs of each neighborhood/community and reinforces the City's natural beauty and resources.

3. **Public Oversight.** Establish an oversight committee to ensure the proposed plan, park acquisition, park upgrades, the points system, and any future administrative adjustments, continue to advance the goal of achieving equitable recreational value.

The above actions are needed if the proposed plan is to meet its stated goals, including this: "A high quality, citywide system of parks, recreation facilities/programs, trails and open space that will meet the needs of San Diego citizens now and in the future."

### **FINDINGS and SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

After carefully reviewing the Draft Parks Master Plan and Draft Amendment to the Recreation Element, the subcommittee has also made the following findings and specific recommendations.

### Parks Master Plan

Park Acreage: The draft Parks Master Plan is based on an assumption that it's not feasible to acquire parkland to meet a standard which is based on population and park acreage. Therefore, the City staff has devised a system which is focused on counting the amenities in and near parks, counting access to parks within and outside of a community, and greatly discounting the value of parkland acreage itself. They use a point system to weigh the value of the capacity and amenities within a park. The proposed points system devalues land and multi-purpose open space, while over-valuing amenities and access, which specifically affects the needs of recreational and organized sports users (e.g., soccer, softball, baseball, etc.).

The CPC has serious concerns about severing the connection between park land and park standards. The proposed point system is also problematic. These aspects of the Plan, and others, need revision.

While it may be possible to devise an adequate points system for park planning, the City staff has acknowledged that their proposed system has not been implemented in any other U.S. city. An obvious conclusion is that the proposed system is untested and unproven, which warrants more public scrutiny and oversight.

Point system: The draft Parks Master Plan includes examples of how the point system would be applied. Our review of the examples revealed the major shortcomings and contradictions in the Plan. Using the Children's Park example:

1. The Plan proposed to take out trees to create more open space. This goes against City policies on Urban Forestry and Climate Action.
2. The category of "Mini-park" is assigned 2 points. This apparently represents the inherent value of the space, the land. The proposed amenities are assigned 34 points. This would mean that amenities can make a Mini-park 17 times more valuable than the land! Devaluing land in that manner shows the extreme imbalance inherent in the Plan.
3. The Plan concluded that the 1.7-acre park will serve as many residents as if it were 10 acres. That is contrary to common sense. It would mean that parkgoers will be concentrated in one-sixth the space as they would be under the existing population-based park standard.

The analysis from Howard Greenstein explains the serious failings of the proposed point system. "In addition to the fact that the scoring system disincentivizes and discourages land acquisition by "down-weighting" park acreage, much of the other scoring just does not make sense or seem appropriate. [An example:] The mere fact that a park site is located within 500 feet of a transit stop, which equals 3 points, should in no way be

considered as valuable as an 8-acre neighborhood park, which also equals 3 points."

Access & Equity: The Plan promotes the use of all parks by all residents, which implies that recreational and sports activities will need to be programmed and managed on a citywide basis, although the plan does not explain how this would be achieved, other than to assign points for access to a park site by transit, bicycle or vehicle within certain timeframes and for a certain duration. As such, Recreation Advisory Groups must be consulted on how the facilities would be equitably managed to allow for increased usage. Additionally, the Plan should include policies which address acceptable recreational opportunities, while protecting environmental resources, within natural open space areas, consistent with approved regional, resource-based and open space park master plans, and local state and federal regulations.

Financial, Oversight and Health Issues:

The Plan should implement a financing plan sufficient to acquire the land and construct the amenities necessary to meet the standard in each community.

To ensure the new points-based standard is applied equitably and to safeguard the public's interest, a non-political, public oversight structure should be created. This body would provide objective oversight of park acquisition, park upgrades, and points system scoring to benefit the public. This oversight committee should be comprised of representatives from the Community Planning Groups, the Recreation Advisory Groups, and include professionals in park planning and park design. Additionally, the oversight committee would provide an oversight function for periodic administrative adjustments and refinements relative to implementation of the points system.

The Plan disregards the immense impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's apparent that parkgoers will need more space to achieve social distancing, as compared to before the pandemic. Yet the Plan would result in much less park space per person. Therefore, the Plan should reflect lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recreation Element: The draft revisions to the Recreation Element are unacceptable; The deletion of references to "population" and "park acreage" would remove the fundamental connection between people and their need for parkland and open space. The General Plan Recreation Element is the overriding policy document which guides the Parks Master Plan, therefore, it is essential that it reflects the City's intention to fully implement the goals of the Parks Master Plan.

Supporting Documents:

These findings are not intended to be comprehensive. We refer readers to the following submitted documents for specific recommendations:

- A. Analysis by Deborah Sharpe, ASLA, Registered Landscape Architect, dated 6/11/20.

- B. Analysis by Howard Greenstein, ASLA, Registered Landscape Architect, dated 6/11/20.
- C. Analysis by Jeff Harkness, ASLA, Registered Landscape Architect, dated 6/13/20.
- D. Letters and other documents submitted to the City by Community Planning Groups and Recreation Advisory Groups, including but not limited to:
  - Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Board, dated 6/10/20.
  - University Community Planning Group, dated 6/10/20.
  - University Heights Recreation Council & Open Space Advisory Group.
  - Greater Golden Hill Planning Committee, dated 6/10/20.
  - La Jolla Shores Community Planning Association, La Jolla Parks and Beaches, Inc., Bird Rock Community Council and Friends of Coast Walk Trail, dated 6/11/20.
  - Cholla Creek Coalition, dated 6/10/20.
- E. Community Planners Committee, dated 5/26/20.
- F. Planning Commission Recommendations, dated 6/18/20.

Move to oppose (GH), second (LV). Delay Planning Commission and City Council approval until groups most affected can consider the proposed changes. Ayes: CH, CLMT, COL, DWNTN, EAS, GH, KT, LJ, LV, MW, MM, MRN, MB, MV, OB, OM, PB, RB, RP, SP/LH, SR, SE, TP, UN. Nays: NP. Abstain: CMR. Motion passes: 24-1-1.

## **6. COMPLETE COMMUNITIES: HOUSING SOLUTIONS AND MOBILITY CHOICES (Action Item) – 45 mins**

Discussion of CPC position.

[Resource: https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/completemunities/housing/solutions](https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/completemunities/housing/solutions)

<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/mobility/mobilitychoices>

### **Board Comment:**

- Many felt the program added density without much consideration for supporting infrastructure.
- Many thought that City staff had not reached out to the planning groups regarding the Complete Communities program and that there was a perception that this was being rushed through the City without vetting with those who would be most affected.
- Some were concerned that the new program could change community character in areas dominated by existing 1-2 story multi-family residences through addition of high-rise buildings.
- Some thought the proposed FAR in the coastal overlay could wall off the coast and that an existing 5 du lot could accommodate 500 du's under the new proposed FAR.
- Outreach to a stakeholders group was criticized as it consisting mainly of developers and consultants.

- There was concern also expressed that density would have the effect of spreading COVID19, as it may compromise the ability to observe social distancing.

**Motions on Housing and Mobility:**

Move to oppose (GH), second (LV). CPC opposes the Housing and Mobility choices component of Complete Communities, because of serious limitations with the draft plan.

The plan has problems with not enough affordable housing, excessive FAR, inadequate transition zoning provisions, and lack of discretionary review for projects.

CPC requests that the City Council not docket Complete Communities for Council consideration but allow time for city staff to make needed changes, for Community Planning Groups and other stakeholders to review the Complete Communities plan, and to review the revisions made to date.

CPC requests that the Infrastructure component be released for review, before other components are considered for approval.

Motion to delay City consideration of Housing and Mobility program component of Complete Communities until planning groups have thoroughly vetted the proposal. Ayes: CLMT, DWNTN, GH, LJ, MW, MRN, MV, KT, LJ, MW, MRN, MV, OB, PB, SP/LH. Nays: CH, COL, EAS, KT, LV, MM, MB, NP, OM, RB, RP, SE, TP, UN. Abstain: CMR, SR.

Amendment: The Housing and Mobility components will be considered separately. The amended motion was adopted by a unanimous vote of 25-0-1.

**Motion:**

Motion to request City Council not docket Housing component for Council consideration but allow time for city staff to make needed changes, for Community Planning Groups and other stakeholders to review the Complete Communities plan, and to review the revisions made to date. Ayes: CH, CLMT, COL, DWNTN, GH, KT, LJ, LV, MW, MM, MRN, MB, MV, NP, OB, OM, PB, RB, RP, SP/LH. Nays: EAS, SE, TP, UN. Abstain: CMR, SR. Motion passes 20-4-2.

Motion to delay City consideration of Mobility component of Complete Communities until planning groups have thoroughly vetted the proposal. Ayes: CLMT, COL, DWNTN, KT, MM, MV, OB, OM, SR. Nays: EAS, LJ, MW, MRN, MB, PB, SP/LH, UN. Abstain: CMR, CH, GH, LV, NP, RB, RP, SE, TP. Motion passes 9-8-9.

**7. REPORTS TO CPC:**

- Staff Report - None
- Subcommittee Reports - None
- Chair's Report - None
- CPC Member Comments - None

**ADJOURNMENT TO NEXT REGULAR MEETING: JULY 28, 2020:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Wally Wulfeck at 9:12 PM.