

# **NORTH PARK MINI-PARK & ASSOCIATED STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS**

CITY OF SAN DIEGO

*Engineering & Capital Projects Department, Architectural Engineering & Parks  
Division*

## **OPEN HOUSE MEETING**

April 28th, 2011

Birch North Park Theatre  
2891 University Avenue, San Diego

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## **S U M M A R Y**

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### **Introduction**

On April 28, 2011, the City of San Diego Engineering & Capital Projects Department convened a series of Open House Meetings related to the North Park Mini-Park & Associated Streetscape Improvement0s Project. The purpose of the meetings was to (a.) introduce and explain the project to stakeholders who are actively involved in the North Park community; (b.) facilitate stakeholders' discussion about their visions for the project, and (c.) identify challenges and opportunities.

### **Format of Open House Meetings**

A total of 8, one-hour meetings occurred with approximately 36 participants. To engage stakeholders who are actively involved in the community, meeting notices were distributed to organized groups focused on planning and community improvement efforts. Participants were encouraged to attend during specified times that grouped organizations with similar expertise and focus in the community:

#### **Group 1:**

- North Park Action Team
- North Park Business Improvement District
- North Park Community Association
- North Park Historical Society
- Stop Graffiti Now
- San Diego Canyon Lands
- WalkSanDiego

**Group 2:**

- North Park Community Plan Update Advisory Committee
- Maintenance Assessment District Advisory Committee
- North Park Project Area Committee
- North Park Planning Committee
- North Park Parking Management Working Group
- North Park Recreation Council

**Group 3:**

- Adjacent businesses and homeowners (owners and tenants)

Additionally, 2 open sessions were scheduled to accommodate any participant who could not attend a recommended time.

Todd Schmit, Park Designer with the Engineering & Capital Projects Department, Architectural Engineering & Parks Division, introduced himself as project manager for the project and asked for self-introductions. After providing an overview of the project purpose and scope, Andy Pendoley of MIG, Inc., part of the project's consultant team, served as meeting facilitator and asked participants questions regarding their visions for the project, as well as issues and opportunities that should be considered during the design process. Mukul Malhotra, Director of Urban Design and Project Manager with MIG, recorded participants' comments on a large wall graphic during the meeting, which are summarized in the following sections.

**Key Themes**

Across the meetings, key themes emerged related to participants' visions, issues and opportunities for the project area:

- Design the space to become the center of North Park and a gathering space that supports local residents and businesses
- Connect the mini-park, streets, and Jefferson Elementary school together through design elements, particularly trees
- Promote safety and security through design
- Respect the needs of and impacts to local residents
- Reflect the local character, particularly through public art
- Account for multiple users' needs and interests
- Address access needs of adjacent property owners on the north side of the mini-park (such as trash collection, fire egress, etc.)
- Assess the feasibility and impacts of providing public restrooms

**Group 1, 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

- Create a landscaped, lush, open green space that serves as a "public oasis"

- Use native plants that require minimal water consumption
- Apply a soft/quiet design
- Design space for outdoor performances that are subtle and passive (e.g., movies in the park)
- Promote safety through design
  - Provide lighting
  - Allow for emergency and public safety access
  - Discourage heavy use from homeless people
- Connect the mini-park, streets, and Jefferson Elementary school together
- Ensure easy maintenance with easy-care and graffiti resistant materials
- Provide wide sidewalks
- Include buffers between the public space and nearby residents
- Include child-friendly design elements
- Integrate interpretive elements that celebrate the neighborhood's history
- Provide public art opportunities
- Assess the practicality of including public restrooms
- Address access, storage, and staging needs of adjacent property owners along the mini-park's north side
- Address drainage and flooding issues

**Group 2, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

- Connect the mini-park, streets, and Jefferson Elementary school together
- Design the space to become the center of North Park
  - Celebrate local history and art
  - Create a gathering space
- Create a business-friendly space (e.g., a place to have lunch)
  - Provide places to sit
  - Play movies on summer evenings
- Make the space uniquely North Park
  - Apply local public art to mitigate the existing blank walls
  - Expand the local farm-to-table food movement by providing an "urban orchard"
- Facilitate the design and community engagement process to become a new model for the City
- Ensure adequate ADA access
- Assess the feasibility of closing the north half of 29<sup>th</sup> Street
- Provide amenities including bike corrals

**Group 3, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

- Design the space to become the center of North Park and a gathering space
  - Provide picnic areas (e.g., a place to have lunch)
  - Create event space

- Foster a sense of shared ownership amongst residents and businesses
- Design the space to become the center of North Park and a gathering space
- Include child- and senior-friendly design elements
  - Provide space for children to play
- Promote safety through design
  - Install lighting and signage
- Provide amenities including trash cans and dog refuse bags
- Provide shade
  - Install trees and appropriate canopies
  - Avoid installing palm trees
- Prevent installation of restrooms to avoid attracting drug addicts and prostitution
- Respect the needs of and impacts to local residents

**Open Session, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

- Design the space to become a gathering space
  - Create an outdoor theatre space
  - Provide picnic areas (e.g., a place to have lunch)
- Emphasize safety through design
  - Mitigate undesirable users and loitering
  - Provide lighting
  - Provide emergency phone access
- Encourage community involvement in policing of the mini-park
- Consider the needs of adults and children
- Strike the right balance of allowing for shade and sun
- Include streetscape elements that are “hardy” and can withstand abuse
- Mitigate air, sound and light pollution from the surrounding area
- Provide more green space along the streets
- Consider changing the street design:
  - Four-way stop at North Park Way and 29<sup>th</sup> Street
  - Parallel parking on streets along the park
  - Enhanced aesthetics with paving and trees
- Respect the needs of and impacts to local residents

**Group 1, 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

- Provide space that reflects the local arts community
  - Street art
  - Stage
  - Link to Ray at Night
  - Home for “temporary art trees” from the Port of San Diego
  - Hand-crafted

- Reflect the cultural, social and economic diversity of North Park
- Apply a common palette of materials to support continuity of design throughout the project area
  - Permeable surfaces
  - Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Provide shade for comfort, protection from the sun, and minimizing heat gain
- Apply sustainable design through appropriate plant selections
- Balance a well-programmed design with a sense of openness and flexibility
- Provide bike parking with corrals through local funding
- Emphasize safety through design
  - Install security cameras
  - Provide bicycle-based patrols
- Consider how the mini-park can generate revenue
- Provide fitness/trail equipment
- Address the needs of dog owners

**Group 2, 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

- Promote safety and security
  - Prevent creating a “homeless hangout”
  - Learn from effective design at Bird Park
  - Consider fencing the park site
- Address parking needs by increasing turnover and enhancing design
- Respect the needs of and impacts to local residents
- Design the space to become a gathering space
  - Create an outdoor theatre, movie and/or special event space
  - Provide picnic areas (e.g., a place to have lunch)
- Connect the parking structure to University Avenue
- Consider providing green grass area
- Apply trees in ways that shift from an urban to neighborhood environment
- Account for a fenced access area on the north side of the mini-park for adjacent property owners

**Group 3, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

- Address parking needs for local businesses through on-street parking or a pilot project of parking management strategies
- Design the space to become a gathering and performance space
  - Create an amphitheatre
  - Provide picnic areas
  - Integrate local art and color palette
  - Consider potential storage needs
- Promote safety and security

- Install lighting and security cameras
- Avoid installing a restroom
- Consider appropriate use of trees
  - Connect mini-park and streets
  - Choose appropriate colors
  - Provide shade
  - Minimize heat gain on concrete
- Celebrate local history
- Calm traffic speeds
- Emphasize low maintenance and water use
- Mitigate excessive trash and foul smells

### **Open Session, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

- Design the space to become a gathering space
  - Support festivities, special events and performing arts
- Promote safety and security
  - Install lighting and security cameras
  - Enforce a curfew
- Design streets to include aggregate sidewalk materials, trees and well articulated crosswalks
- Integrate local public art
- Address the feasibility and safety of public restrooms
- Account for multiple users and ages
- Install a fence/barrier at the northwest corner of the mini-park for local property owners' access
  - Control smells from trash
  - Provide service, personnel and emergency access
  - Provide space for a potential public restroom
  - Allow for theatre staging
  - Provide additional storage for the theatre
- Design with unifying elements such as acorn lights and aggregate sidewalks
- Maintain existing bike lanes, and explore the bikeway potential of North Park Way
- Consider safety improvements on North Park Way as it intersects Granada Avenue and 29<sup>th</sup> Street, including the use of stop signs
- Address the needs for elementary student bus access on Utah Street
- Consider relocating the farmer's market to the mini-park site
- Underground utility boxes

### **Next Steps & Close**

Mr. Schmit closed each meeting by thanking participants for their time and encouraging their attendance at the first Community Workshop on June 4.