



NORTH PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE  
**PUBLIC FACILITIES, TRANSPORTATION, PARKS, AND PUBLIC ART SUBCOMMITTEE**

*www.northparkplanning.org*

**MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, November 9, 2011, 6:00 p.m., North Park Recreation Center/Adult Center  
2719 Howard Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104

**Attendance:**

**Seated Board Members:** Dionné Carlson (Chair), René Vidales (Vice-Chair), Vicki Granowitz, Lucky Morrison, Peter Hill, Cheryl Dye, Robert Barry (arrived 6:09)

**Community Voting Members:** Ernie Bonn, William Schneider, Rob Steppke, Kitty Callen (arrived 6:19)

**Board members not seated:** None

**Also present:** Audrey Edney

**Parliamentary Items**

**Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm

**Approve November 9, 2011 Agenda. Motion: Approve Agenda. Granowitz/Bonn 9-0-0**

**Chair's Comments.** Chair Carlson announced the following:

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**Approval of Previous Minutes: September 14, 2011 & October 5, 2011.**

**Motion: Approve September 14, 2011 Minutes with the following revisions: Spell out IBA as "Independent Budget Analyst". Bonn/Steppke 8-0-2 (Hill and Schneider abstained)**

**Motion: Approve October 5, 2011 Minutes with the following revisions: Under Master Plan and Precise Master Plan, fourth bullet point, revise from "*it was because they ran out of funds*" to "*Jones & Jones changed the scope of work from the original expressed appropriation and therefore ran out of funds*". Steppke/Hill 5-0-5 (Dye, Bonn, Schneider, Steppke, Barry abstained)**

**Announcements:** (*see 11/09/2011 agenda for details and live links*)

1. Lecture series titled "Shaping our community's future: Tools and Basics of Community Planning". Lecture series will take continue from November 2011 to April 2012 at Grace Lutheran Church on Park Blvd. and Lincoln Ave.
2. New Mapping Tool is now available for crime statistics on the SANDAG website
3. North Park Recreation Council is being put on hold because there are not enough people to have a quorum. This item will be heard at a future sub-committee meeting.
4. Walgreen's has a medical van on 32<sup>nd</sup> St. for free testing for certain illnesses.
5. Walgreen's and CVS have a lot of transients asking for money. It was suggested to talk to the store managers on a regular basis to reduce the problem. This item will be heard at a future sub-committee meeting

**Non Agenda Public Comment:** None

**Information Item:**

**A. Traffic Calming Median Chokers. 2900 block of Madison Avenue.**

Chair Carlson has received many email and verbal complaints about the recently implemented traffic calming median project.

- Complaints included loss/reduction of parking spaces, general “ugliness” of medians being incompatible with historic neighborhood, lack of landscaping, grey color, excessive size of medians, lack of ADA accessibility to medians, so that they cannot and do not function as pedestrian refuges, incompatibility with “complete streets” policy, as they so narrow the traffic lane as not to allow for a bike lane, several questions of why not “bump outs” instead, which better serve community character, rather than these type of traffic chokers, and a lot questions about how this was allowed to happen with what neighbors considered to be no noticing or public input.
- According to City staff, in 2008 a community member resident at that intersection, requested traffic calming on Madison Avenue at Kansas Street. A petition was circulated to property owners at the intersection and obtained the number of signatures required by policy in place at that time. (uncertain if this was 8 or 12 signature, follow up)
- The project was placed on the facilities financing list as a standard project and was implemented as a matter of course when the project reached the top of the list and the funding came available.
- Carlson & Vidales checked past minutes, and the project did not come before the NPPC. They were unable to find any record of community input. City Staff indicated there was a different policy in place then from the current policy, and it was not the policy at that time (which it is today) to send these items to planning committees for review if the required number of signatures had been obtained on the petition.
- There is no MAD (Maintenance Assessment District) in the area. Therefore no landscaping was installed. It is currently City policy not to install landscaping where there is no MAD to pay for maintenance.
- This is what a “Standard” City traffic calming project can be expected to look like where no MAD is in place to fund maintenance for enhancements like landscaping. Residents should be made aware of this when they request such projects..
- There are not many options to enhance the aesthetics of the medians. One option is to use colored concrete or to color the concrete. It was suggested that cobble stones might be used. Landscaping would enhance the looks, but is not an option unless maintenance funding can be found.
- The 2002 Public Facilities Financing Plan (PFFP) will be reviewed by City Staff to see if any other similar projects are anticipated in North Park. Chair Carlson requested that NPPC be notified of any other such projects prior to their being implemented, so that the public can be noticed and have an opportunity to comment first.
- Removing the medians is not an option at this time. The earliest opportunity to re-evaluate this project would be after it has been in place at least one year.

This item will be heard at a future sub-committee meeting after obtaining additional information.

**Old Business**

**A. Texas Street Improvement Design.** *Update/Continuation of discussion of improvements to Texas Street from Madison Avenue to Camino Del Rio South, part of the mitigation improvements for the Quarry Falls (Civitas) Development in Mission Valley.*

No update. Chair Carlson will follow up with Mark Radelow of Sudberry Properties about the implementation schedule of the project, and the Traffic Control Plan to designate the lane configuration of Texas Street during construction.

**B. Plaza de Panama – Balboa Park (Project No. 233958).** *Proposed project includes an amendment to the Balboa Park Master Plan; an amendment to the Central Mesa Precise Plan; and a Site Development Permit. Ongoing discussion of parking, pedestrian & vehicular circulation for possible action.*

The discussion focused on the process for the following documents:

- Amendments of the Balboa Park Master Plan and the Balboa Park Central Mesa Precise Plan
- Site Development Permit
- Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

*Amendments of the Balboa Park Master Plan and the Balboa Park Central Mesa Precise Plan*

The amendments will be released electronically on November 22 for public comment, but more than likely City staff will respond to comments in the staff report that goes to Planning Commission.

A precedent is the Zoo example, where everything went to Planning Commission, the Planning Commission made recommendations within their motion, and then it went to City Council for approval of the Plan Amendments and the Site Development Permit.

The following scenarios were discussed:

- If amendments go to Planning Commission, then the whole project will have 2 public hearings.
- If amendments do not go to Planning Commission, then the whole project will only have one public hearing.
- For any other project, a pre-requisite of the project in most cases is to have the amendments as part of the decision.
- Check with City on process to be followed.

The following comments were presented on both the Amendment to the Balboa Park Master Plan and the Amendment to the Balboa Park Central Mesa Precise Plan:

- The proposed changes to the goals of the BPMP and the BPCMPP are sufficiently substantial as to warrant a full plan Update, and not just plan amendments tailored to fit this project.
- The main goal of the Jacobs' plan is to reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts, but the plan amendments do not achieve that goal.
- The plan merely moves the pedestrian/vehicular conflicts from the Plaza de Panama to the Alcazar Gardens Parking Lot, and likely increases the potential for such conflicts there and also in other locations.
- There is no evidence of accidents or vehicle/pedestrian conflicts in the Plaza de Panama with the existing traffic circulation. ARJIS shows 0 accidents in the PdeP in the past year.
- The project creates connectivity issues, and does not meet NPPC community plan update goals of increasing walk/bike connectivity and connectivity to transit.
- The project adds more traffic through the park, which contravenes adjacent Community Plans, General Plan, etc. Project does not meet goals of State mandates to decrease vehicle traffic and increase transit.
- The project focuses parking in the center of the park, which is contrary to current planning trends, which deem placing parking on the periphery of a park, to be more appropriate.
- The plan proposes to increase parking by 274 parking spaces at a cost of more than \$25 million dollars, roughly the equivalent of \$91,250 per parking space, more than ten times the average cost for a parking space in an urban environment.
- The public input process is unclear.

- According to the Jones & Jones Land Use, Parking and Circulation Study, the Organ Pavillion parking structure should not be implemented because the periphery of the park is the preferred location for the needed parking; i.e. the Park Promenade, Inspiration Point, and behind the Globe Theater.
- The dirt removed for the project is being imported into the East Mesa Landfill, which needs to be in conformance with the Balboa Park East Mesa Precise Plan.
- The project requires a Revenue Bond to be paid off by Parking Fees. However, the structure is unlikely to achieve the 88% projected occupancy required to generate sufficient to service the debt on the bond.
- The Bond debt would be guaranteed by the General Fund, placing the city at financial risk if projected revenues are not received.
- This is a very large and costly project with substantial impacts for little gain.
- The project creates an undesirable big picture that creates more problems than it solves.
- Stated goals are to minimize and reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts, but in reality the plan amendments increase pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. Substantive changes to the goals are being proposed.
- A comparison of conflicts in the existing Plaza de Panama lot with the Alcazar parking lot needs to be put together.

Cheryl Dye to create a cover letter from previous minutes, discussions and notes and hand-outs to comment on the plan amendments. Letter to include the following:

1. Process
2. Substantive changes without outreach
3. Paid parking and bonds liability
4. Impacts to Historical Resources

Peter Hill to complete plan amendment spreadsheet and get to Vicki Granowitz. Rene and Robert to work with Vicki in getting comments into spreadsheet for discussion by full board at special meeting in December.

Further comments on Amendments to be sent to Vicki Granowitz, who will forward to Cheryl for incorporation in the letter. A question was raised as to whether two cover letters would be needed (one for each plan amendment).

### Site Development Permit

It was brought up that 13 years of substantial public input were required for the previous plan amendments. This timeline would be reduced to less than a year for the proposed amendments. The changes that are being proposed are substantial enough to require a full plan update and a more rigorous public process.

There was a recent change in State Law that places project specific legislation in order to push a project.

The project proponents project an 80% occupancy level for the parking structure. The Independent Budget Analyst (IBA) report states that this occupancy that is not realistic, because there is ample parking in other areas of the park during the day. \$14M is the maximum amount of bond debt that could be serviced with the projected 80% occupancy. IBA report states \$1.2M per year is allocated for debt service; somehow this is not counted as debt and does not go to a public vote.

The phrase: “When Palisades become pedestrianized, another parking structure will be needed at Inspiration Point” acknowledges that a parking deficit is being created by implementing this project.

The number of spaces stated as being provided in the parking structure has varied slightly with each plan revision provided to NPPC. 3/15/2011 plans propose 785 spaces in the structure, 10/14/2011 plans propose

799 spaces in the structure, 11/22/2011 plans propose 798 spaces in the structure. Revise calculations of projected price per new parking spot, projected turnover and revenue, etc. to reflect most current set of plans.

(Rob Steppke left at 6:25 p.m.)

The following comments were also presented on the Site Development Permit:

- Development Services (Land Development Engineering Review) has approved a Deviation from Standards for the Roads (from Standards for Public Streets to Standards for Parks). The width reduction in the street section increases the possibility of accidents and opens the City to liabilities. The section provided in many cases is 28-foot curb to curb, which allows one lane in each direction but does not account for the increasing use of bicycles; the minimum curb to curb width in order to allow bicycles and one vehicular lane in each direction is 38-foot.
- The adequacy of all the proposed internal roads and intersections including the required number of lanes, and the types of intersections' controls (stop signs, signals, etc.) and their acceptable operational levels of service should be demonstrated in the transportation impact analysis (TIA) to support the presented project layout, striping plans, and intersection controls. If the TIA cannot render acceptable levels of services at any of the above locations, then plans should be revised accordingly.
- The dirt exported from the Plaza de Panama project will be dumped into the existing landfill on the eastern portion of Balboa Park. Conformance with the Balboa Park East Mesa Precise Plan will need to be verified. Landfill may need to be capped.

*Environmental Impact Report (EIR)*

The EIR will be released for public review in January, 2012.

The following assignments were made:

Investigate Landfill and capping - Morrison

Vehicle/Pedestrian conflicts – Vidales

Cover Letter (with two attachments) – Dye, Barry

Impact changes to historical resources (should be reversible) – Dye

Create spreadsheet for Amendment comments – Hill

Coordinate adding comments to spreadsheet – Granowitz, Vidales

Further investigate Parking structure Bond financing– Hill

**C. Discussion of “Park & Recreation Needs Assessment Survey for the Greater Golden Hill North Park, & Uptown Communities”.**

This item was not discussed due to time constraints

**Next meeting date:** Wednesday, January 11, 2011.

**Adjournment. Motion: To adjourn meeting Dye/Vidales. 10-0-0.** Meeting adjourned 7:57 p.m.