



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

*www.northparkplanning.org*

**MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, August 10, 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), Lucky Morrison, Peter Hill

**Community Voting Members:** Rob Steppke, Kitty Callen, Ernie Bonn (arrived 6:14 pm)

**Board members not seated:** None

**Also present:** Andrew Rice, Ellen Jenne & Michelle Trudell from Caltrans; Joshua Reese, Dennis Stein, Matt Sosa, Jeff Halleran

**Parliamentary Items**

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

**Approve August 10, 2011 Agenda. Motion: Approve Agenda. Vidales/Callen 6-0-0**

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

- The Head-in Pilot parking project has been installed in the block between Meade and El Cajon. Feedback from the neighbors is positive so far. The block between Monroe and Meade is not yet striped.

**Approve July 13, 2011 Minutes. Motion: Approve July 13, 2011 minutes. Hill/Callen 5-0-1 (Morrison abstained)**

**Announcements:**

1. Announcements were attached to the printed agendas and not read out by the chair for sake of time.
2. Ernie Bonn mentioned that 'Taste of University Heights' will be held on Sunday, Sept. 18, from noon to 5.

**Non Agenda Public Comment:** None

**Information Items:**

**A. Update on Caltrans SR-94/BRT project. Andrew Rice, Project Manager**

Andrew Rice and his team presented two possible alternatives for the project.

Alternative 1:

- Re-configuration of 28<sup>th</sup> St. overpass, 30<sup>th</sup> St. overpass, 32<sup>nd</sup> St. underpass, I-15 and SR 94 interchange
- Eliminates NB I-15 to SR 94 westbound
- Eliminates ability to exit at Market St. exit when transferring from SR 94 to Southbound I-15
- Removes all left hand connectors at the I-15N/SR 94 interchange
- Spends more money on interchanges

Alternative 2:

- Keeps much of the circulation as it exists now
- Re-configures 28<sup>th</sup> St. overpass, 30<sup>th</sup> St. overpass, 32<sup>nd</sup> St. underpass
- Does not remove left hand connectors at I-15/SR 94
- Requires a sizable elevated structure for BRT and HOV lanes along SR 94 west of I-805
- Spends more money on elevated structure for BRT and HOV
- Has more visual impacts than alternative 1

Both alternatives have a similar budget. Board members expressed concerns at elimination of the ability to get to the Costco business complex exit when transitioning from SR 94 to I-15 South, as proposed in Alternative 1, and also at the visual impacts of the large elevated structure required. Board members asked about mitigation measures for impacts including condemnation of private property for right-of-way. Project has been designed to minimize condemnation and there are expected to be improvements to the bridges across SR94 as part of the project

Mr. Rice mentioned that the team has been talking to both Greater Golden Hill and Sherman Heights community planning/community groups. The EIR will be released in summer 2013, the final EIR in 2014, and improvements completed and project to open by late 2020.

For updates, check [www.keepsandiegomoving.com](http://www.keepsandiegomoving.com)

#### **B. Update on Skateboard Park Group. Dionné Carlson/Lynn Elliott**

Chair Carlson and Lynn Elliott attended a 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting for a proposed skate park in Montclair Park.

Dennis Stein gave a short presentation on the need for more skateboard facilities in the area. He mentioned that we live in a highly dense area within 5 square miles and without a skate park. There was a 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of his Skateboard group in March with good attendance, a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting also was heavily attended. Representatives from the Tony Hawk Foundation were present at the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. The Tony Hawk Foundation has researched ways to make urban landscape more skateboard proof. Linear parks were mentioned, with an example cited in Tacoma, WA where skateboard elements are connected through sidewalks. It was mentioned that a central location is preferred for this kind of facility. The Tony Hawk foundation has a checklist of items that identify what makes a good skatepark location. The representatives from the Tony Hawk Foundation also mentioned in that meeting that one skate park recommendation is to have a 'skateable' element within an overall park. One advantage of skate parks is that they cut down undesirable activities in a park by using underutilized areas. Mr. Stein said that the group identified some possible sites, but not selected any yet. They want to concentrate on the concept first.

Lynn Elliott is on the Recreation Council and added that there lots of young couples that have moved into the area and have had kids that soon will need options for recreation.

The results of the recent Parks Survey on the question regarding skate parks suggest that the right people did not participate. Lucky Morrison asked for statistics on young people and suggested Mr. Stein contact Don Lightling , who has expressed an interest in skate parks during CPUAC meetings.

René Vidales stated in that the North Park Mini-Park Advisory Committee, the possibility of a Skate Park was mentioned, but was not discussed because it was not part of the agenda. Mr. Vidales said that there was a Mini-Park design meeting in June and suggested attending future charrettes and design meetings for the NP Mini-Park. Mr. Vidales also talked about noise study requirements, and a possible solution is to have a skate park as a part of a neighborhood park and making the rest of the park usable to everyone.

Rob Steppke talked about noise studies and possible issues with neighbors. Boundary Street had recently some undergrounding of utilities and the area is not conducive to planting trees so therefore may be a possible location for a skate park. Kitty Callen also suggested that Boundary Street may be a good location because of the current freeway noise.

The possibility of exploring Joint-use Agreements with schools was mentioned, but these agreements only work for after school hours.

Ernie Bonn commented on the noise issue, but sees the opportunity of a skate park as a problem remover for other issues.

Additional information can be obtained in [www.sdskateparks.com](http://www.sdskateparks.com) or by contacting Dennis Stein at [dennis@searocketbistro.com](mailto:dennis@searocketbistro.com) 858-663-7752 <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=607048164>

## **New Business**

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

Chair Carlson talked about the concept of equivalencies as brought up recently during the Community Plan Update process. She mentioned that Development Impact Fees (DIF) often pay for our parks. The City staff has previously said that North Park residents use Balboa Park facilities and therefore Balboa Park projects should be included in the North Park Facilities Financing Plan (NPFFP). The NPFFP identifies future projects where DIF funds can be spent on, and also determines the amount of the DIF that residential and commercial/industrial projects would pay.

The questions in the recent Park & Recreation Needs Assessment Survey were formulated without any notice to or consultation with knowledgeable community stakeholders or from anyone in the community. There was a letter from the City to the Balboa Park Committee, which was not given to any adjacent Community Planning Group (CPG). The letter says that results from the survey will be relied upon to inform the Community Plan Updates from all three CPGs.

Chair Carlson previously contacted Beth Jaworski from Uptown Planners (Ms. Jaworski has a background in social policy and is knowledgeable about research surveys and resulting data used in decision making) and read aloud Ms. Jaworski’s response as follows:

“Here are the problems I see: The questions are too broad and too general. And, the choices you give people as possible answers biases the results:

For instance, you could ask: How often do you use Balboa Park: a. every day; b. once a week; c. once a month; d. a few times a year; e. less than once a year. If you look closely at the choices I gave you, you'll see that you have 4 out of 5 chances for giving a response that could be used to suggest that someone uses the park very regularly. Most local people probably would not say that they use the park less than once a year, so they will automatically be forced into choosing an option that you could then use to argue that the park is used more than it really is. It is EASY to set up a survey to skew results without people knowing what is happening!!!! A faulty survey could allow a decision maker to conclude, perhaps with extreme inaccuracy, that Balboa Park meets the park and rec needs for people in surrounding communities; therefore, you don't need more parks.

Surveys can be used to justify just about any kind of conclusion you want. Also, they do not help much in deciding how to allocate scarce resources. One of the best ways to find out how to spend public money is to include questions that acknowledge the reality of scarcity. There is only so much money to go around: how do you want to spend it? People need to confront the issue of choice. Do you want guns or butter? (a classic trade-off scenario in econ). The survey such as the one I saw the other night might be a good starting point for a more in depth survey; but in my opinion it is a poor survey to use to make an ultimate decision about whether we need more parks in the mid-town.

The little bit of the park survey I saw basically invited people to confirm that obvious: Yes, Balboa Park is nice. I like outside activities. I do use Balboa Park for activity. That's all it says. It should not be used to make decisions about how to spend park and rec dollars.”

Chair Carlson agreed with Ms. Jawarski that questions in the survey were too broad and general without educating participants about DIF fees and the impacts of their answers (participants unlikely to have answered as they did had they been told \$ would be diverted from local parks into Balboa Park), and the forced answer options bias the results. In conclusion, this was a poor survey with questionable results that should not be relied upon to make decisions for the Mid-City area.

Ernie Bonn stated that we cannot accept what was said in the survey, and that DIF fees should be used to improve the neighborhood.

Rob Steppke said that Uptown Planners were also unhappy with the survey.

(Lucky Morrison left at 7:35 pm)

Peter Hill also agreed that, given that communities were not consulted, the survey was engineered to produce certain results for obtaining fees.

René Vidales would like the sub-committee and Planning Committee to make a strong statement to reject the results of the survey because they give the false idea that there is no need for additional park facilities, and agrees that DIF fees should be used within Greater North Park.

Lynn Elliott is glad that there was follow-up on this issue, and would like to see this topic incorporated into the Community Plan Update.

At the NPPC meeting Debra Sharp from the City said that the survey was about obtaining information from stakeholders.

This item will be discussed further at a future meeting.

## **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 (Civita) Development in Mission Valley. No new information.
- 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.

Rob Steppke mentioned that according to a presentation given by Jacob’s team, Development Services will analyze the alternatives for goals and vision, and either inclusion or exclusion in EIR will be determined by Development Services.

Chair Carlson stated that she had called City Project Manager Michelle Sokolowski, to ask whether there were any changes/updates to the project plans since the last set of plans the Committee received. Ms. Sokolowski had not yet received changes at that time and Cycle 11 of the Cycle Issues Report is the most current to date, however updates were expected.

**C. Mid-City Rapid Bus Project.** Discussion/Update.

The Angle Parking proposal as mitigation for the project was approved by City Council. This was the City Council's only opportunity to take action on the project. No further action is required from the Council and the project will move forward.

**Next meeting date:** Wednesday, September 14, 2011.

**Adjournment. Motion: To adjourn meeting. Steppke/Hill. 6-0-0.** Meeting adjourned 8:09 p.m.