

Parks and Recreation Department

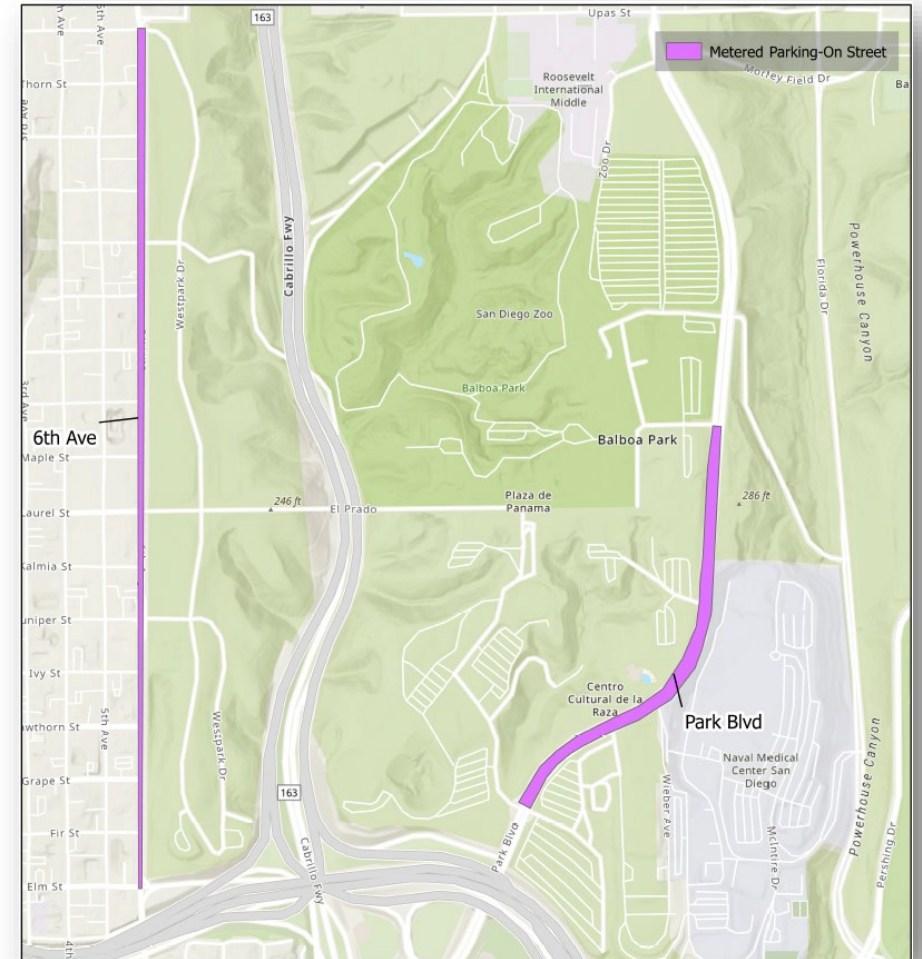
Balboa Park Paid Parking Implementation Update

Balboa Park Committee
September 4, 2025

Balboa Park Meter Zone

Background

- Paid parking at Balboa Park anticipated to impact adjacent 6th Avenue and Park Blvd
- Parking meter zone required to be established to implement paid parking at on street locations
- California Vehicle Code requires Parking Meter Zones to be established by ordinance
- Council Policy 200-04 requires a parking study to establish a parking meter zone



Proposed On Street Parking Meter Areas

Parking Study Findings

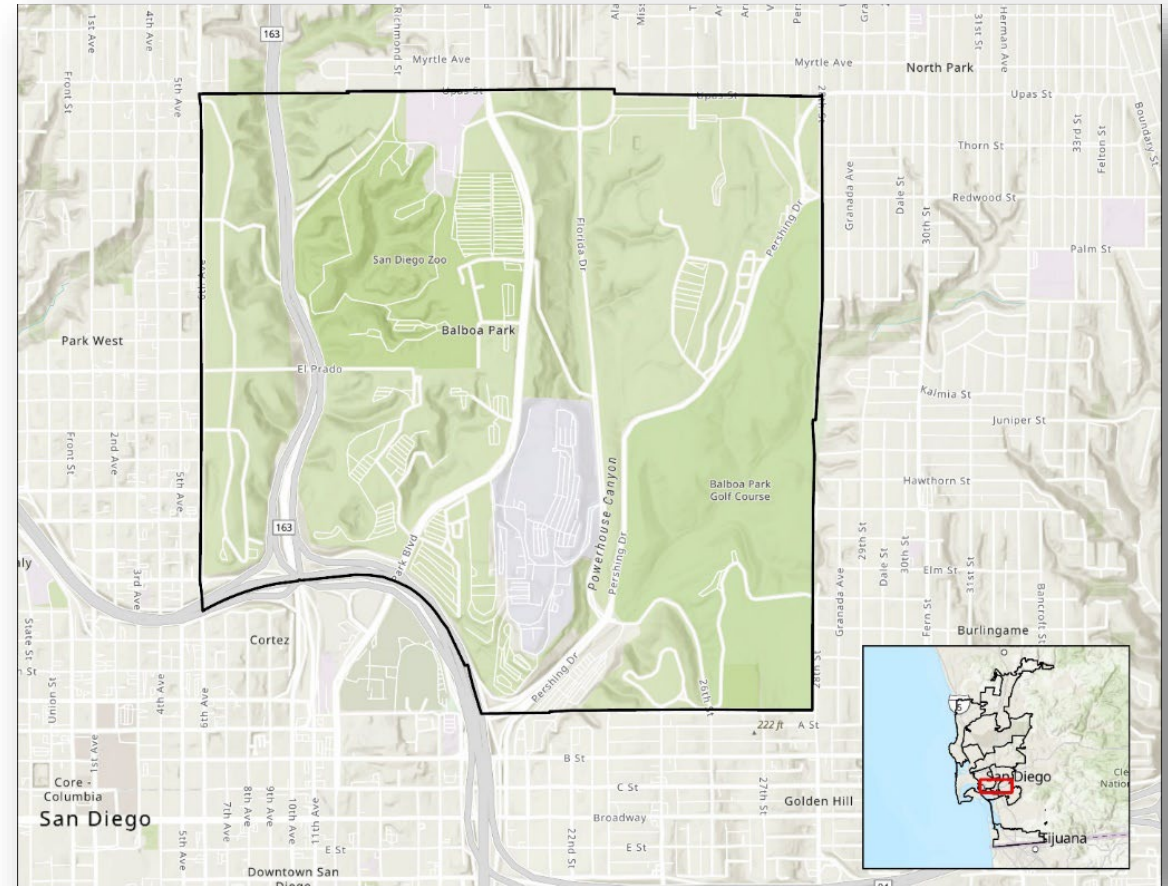
Background

- Sixth Avenue (segments from Elm Street to Upas)
 - Parking occupancy is moderate to high; many segments exceed 85% occupancy
 - Low level of turnover – vehicles parked during the entire 12 hour period
- Park Blvd (segments from Presidents Way to Village Place)
 - Parking occupancy moderate
 - Moderate level of turnover
- Anticipated parking occupancy will increase on both streets due to paid parking in Balboa Park

Location	Item	Value
6 th Avenue (segments from Elm Street to Upas)	Average Parking Occupancy	81%
	Peak Occupancy	94%
	Average Parking Duration (hours)	5 Hrs
Park Blvd (segments from Presidents Way to Village Place)	Average Parking Occupancy	72%
	Peak Occupancy	84%
	Average Parking Duration (hours)	4 Hrs

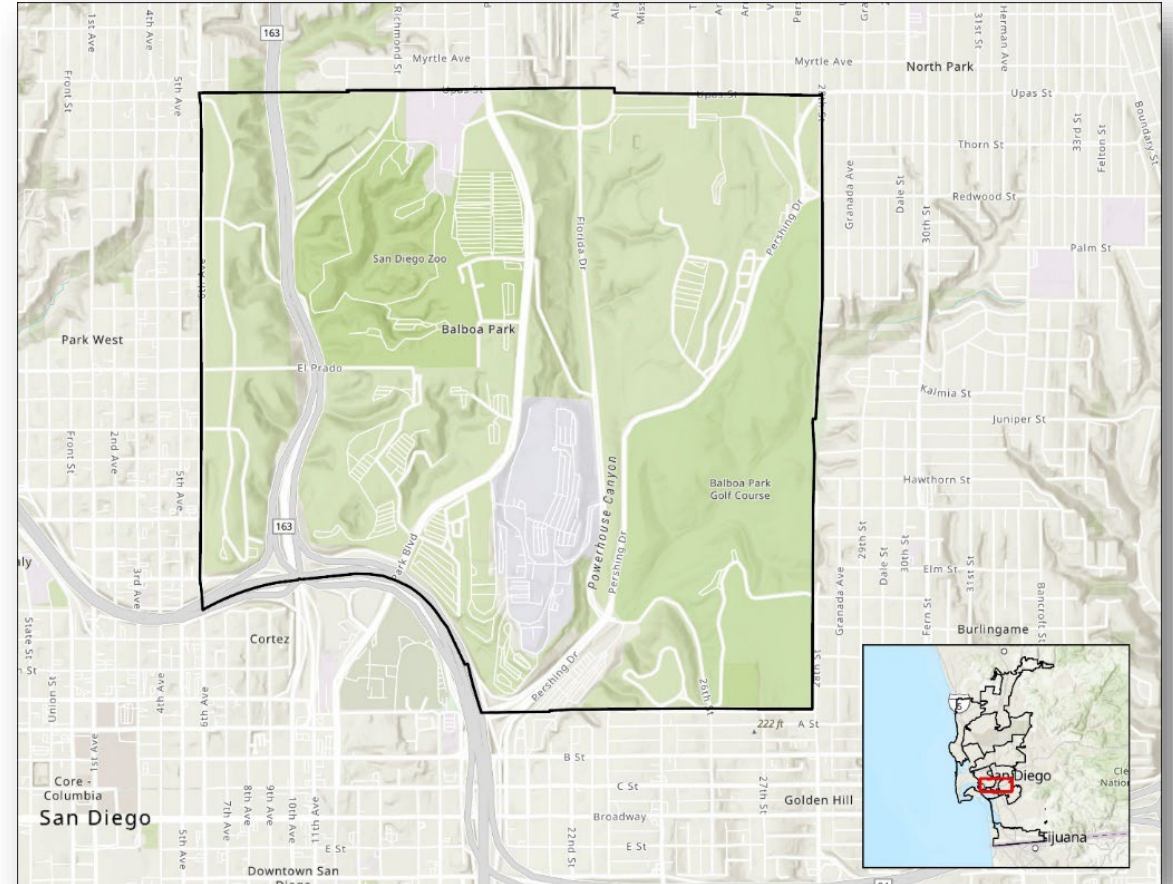
Parking Meter Zone Boundary

- South of Upas Street, west of 28th Street, north of Russ Boulevard and west to and including the western side of 6th Avenue
- Parking meter revenue must be spent within the parking meter zone boundary



On Street Paid Parking Implementation Plan

- Install nearly 300 metered spaces on 6th Ave (Elm to Upas) and Park Blvd (Presidents Way to Village Place) by October 1st
- \$2.50/hour; 4-hour maximum duration; 8am – 8pm; 7 days/week
- Signage, markings, and meter installation throughout September



Balboa Park Paid Parking

Goals and Objectives

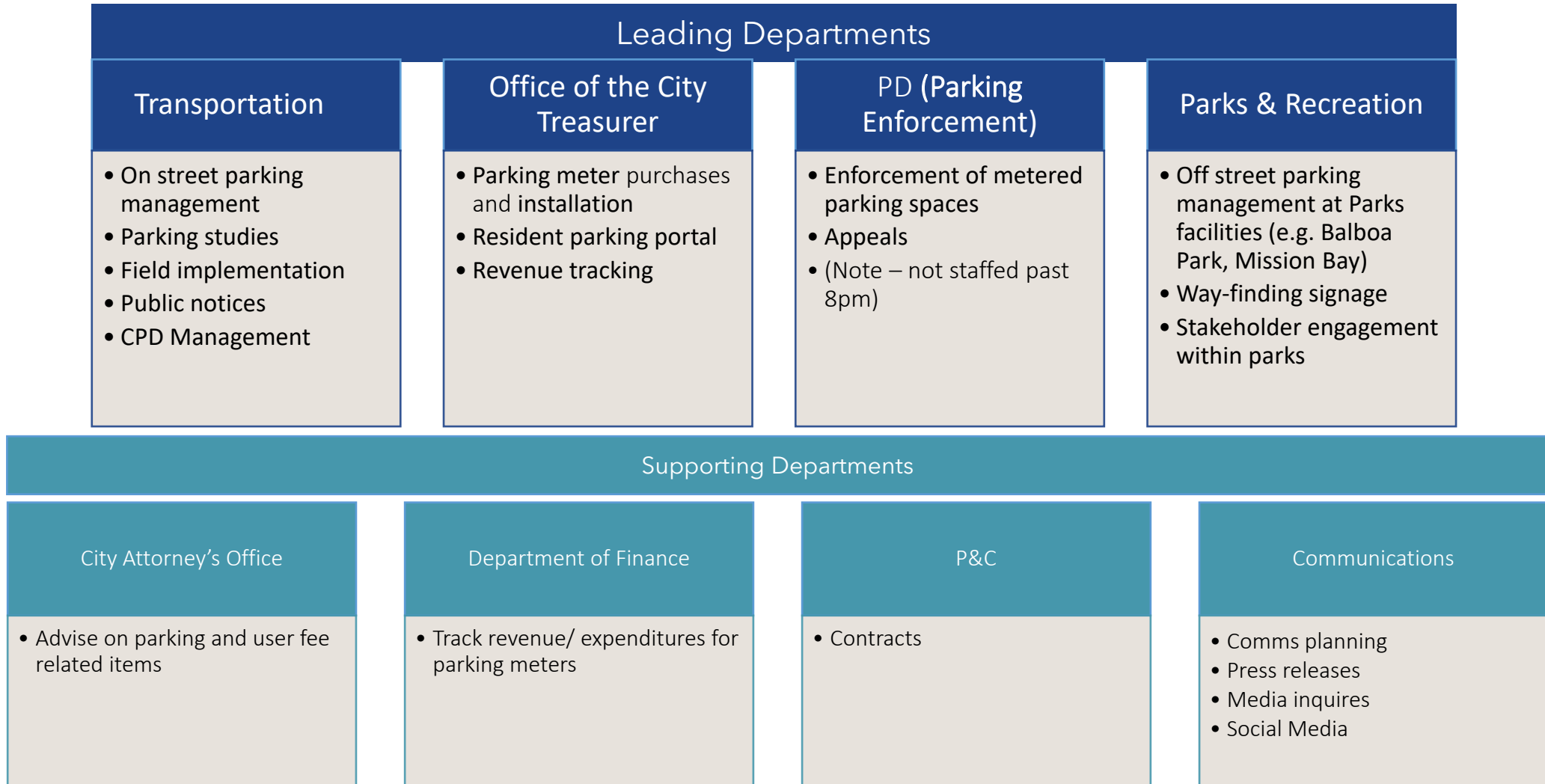
At the request of the Mayor and City Council, Parks and Recreation staff are working in partnership and collaboration across City departments to implement a paid parking program within Balboa Park.

The primary goals are to **improve parking management, support long-term financial sustainability of the park, and enhance the overall experience for park visitors.**

This proposal represents a consultation planning effort, incorporating input from various stakeholders including the **Balboa Park Committee, Forever Balboa Park, the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership, and the San Diego Zoo.**



Balboa Park Parking Management in City of San Diego – Roles Overview



Program Overview

Goals and Objectives

The program includes multiple components: **a tiered rate structure, resident discount program, and accommodations for park-based employees and volunteers.**

It also addresses coordination with Zoo-managed parking lots, **the use of modern payment and enforcement technologies,** and **reinvestment of collected revenue directly into Balboa Park.**

A citywide **communications strategy** and **on-going evaluation process** are also being planned to support successful rollout and ongoing program adjustments.



Parking Management Plan

Off Street Lots

The draft proposal is **informed by the Parking Demand Management Study (completed in 2024)**, which analyzed visitor patterns, lot-by-lot occupancy, average length of stay, and arrival/departure data.

The proposal introduces a **pricing model with three levels**, designed to reflect demand and proximity to high-traffic destinations within the park.

The goal is to ensure parking availability for visitors and reduce congestion, especially in the most impacted areas.



Areas Studied in Orange

Parking Management Plan

Off Street Lots

Area	Occupancy Average	Parking Spaces Availability
Balboa Park - Lot 44 - North of Village Place	70%	226
Balboa Park - Lot 45 - Natural History Museum	88%	102
Balboa Park - Lot 46 - Casa De Balboa	89%	82
Balboa Park - Lot 47 - Fleet Science Center North	77%	154
Balboa Park - Lot 48 - Fleet Science Center South	54%	120
Balboa Park - Lot 49 - Alacazar Garden	88%	120
Balboa Park - Lot 50 - Organ Pavilion	72%	352
Balboa Park - Lot 51 - Pan American Plaza	78%	150
Balboa Park - Lot 53 - Starlight Bowl	38%	509
Balboa Park - Lot 54 - Veterans Museum	34%	406
Balboa Park - Lot 55 - Inspiration Point	9%	924
Balboa Park - Balboa Dr	52%	408
Balboa Park - Quince Dr	36%	5
Balboa Park - El Prado	92%	17
Balboa Park - Juniper Rd	63%	25
Balboa Park - Village Pl	71%	71



Areas Studied in Orange

Tiered Pricing Structure

Data Driven Approach

Level 1 (High Demand / Core Area): Includes lots in the Central Mesa area such as: Alcazar, Organ Pavilion, and Palisades. We are proposing this to have the highest daily rate (\$12).

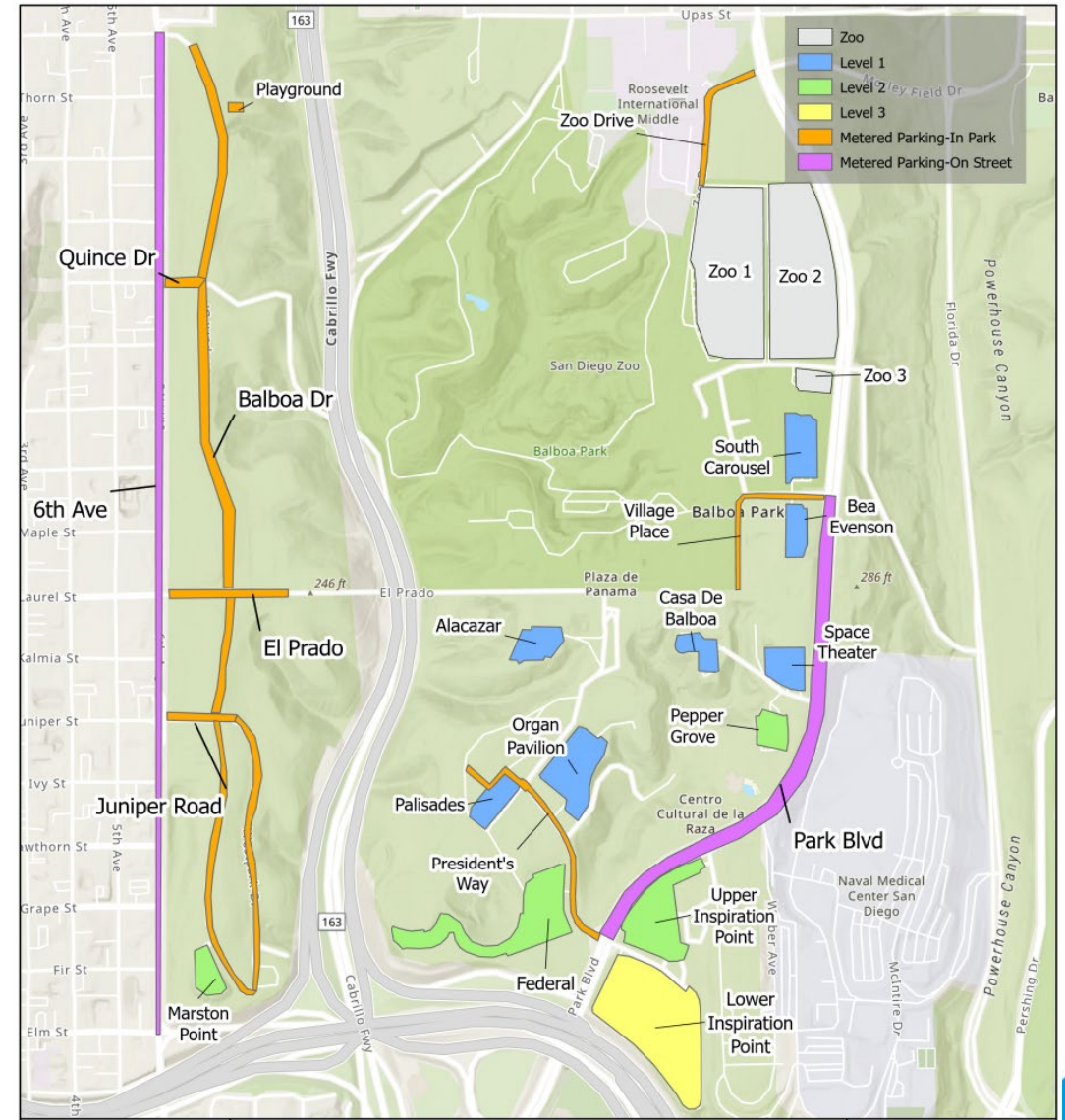
Level 2 (Moderate Demand): Includes lots like Pepper Grove, Federal, and Marston Point. Rates would be set at 50% of Level 1 (e.g., \$6).

Level 3 (Peripheral Lots): Includes Inspiration Point (Upper and Lower) priced at 50% of Level 1, but **the first two hours would be free** to encourage access for short-term visits.

Park Road Parking (e.g., El Prado, Balboa Drive, Village Place) would be metered at \$2.50/hour (four-hour max), matching nearby streets.

Enforcement Hours: 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM daily.

Accessible Parking: All ADA-designated spots remain free of charge and time limit with proper placards displayed (approximately 180) within parking lots, and all park roads remain free with no time restrictions.



City-Resident Parking Proposal

Off Street Lots

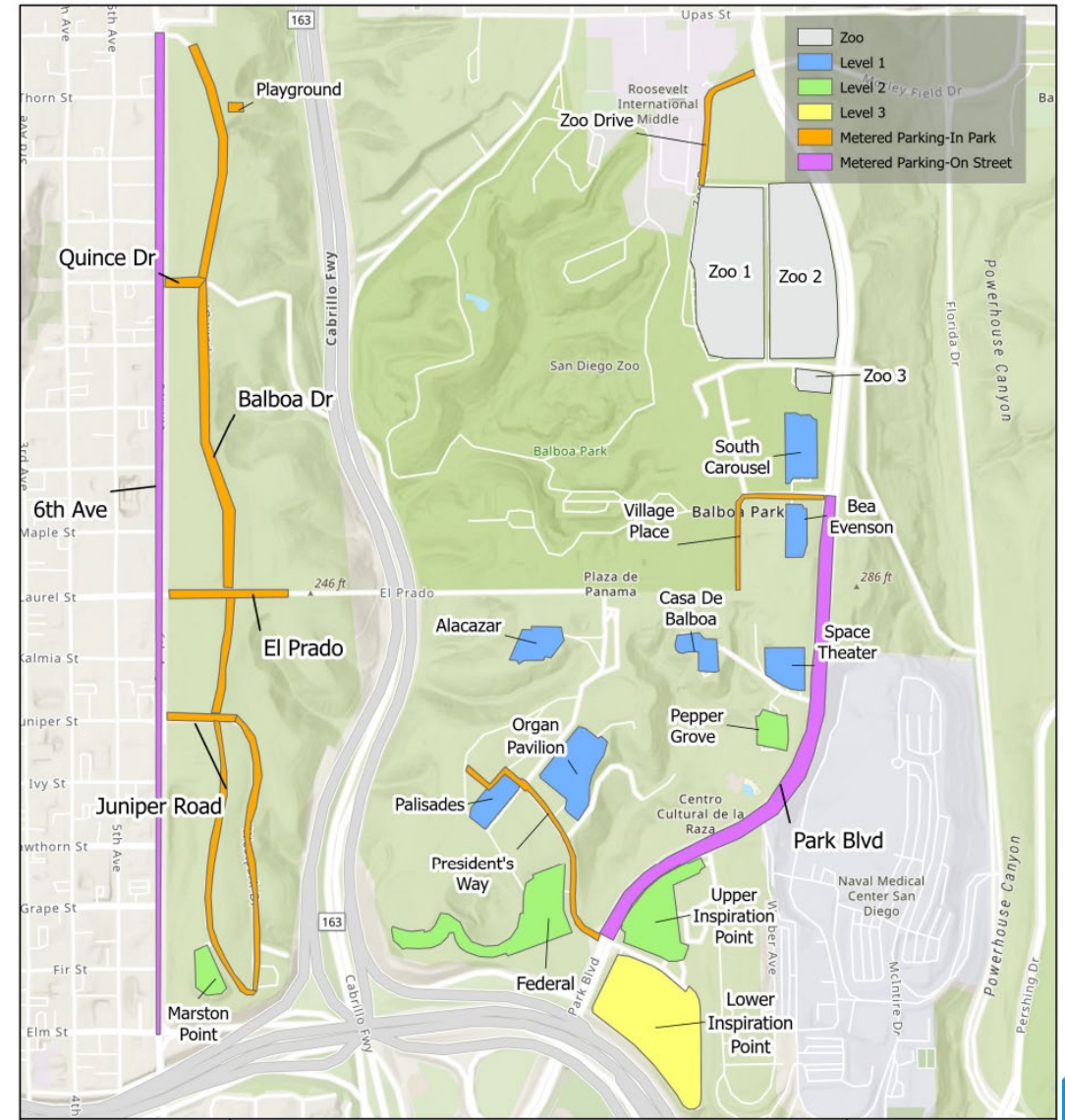
City Council members have expressed interest in a **discounted rate for City of San Diego residents**.

The proposal offers a **50% discount off Level 1 rates for verified residents** through an **account-based online system**.

Residents will **submit proof of address and pay a one-time account verification fee of \$5**. Discounted daily parking sessions may be purchased in advance and will be linked to their license plate and verified electronically. Limits will be one session per vehicle per day.

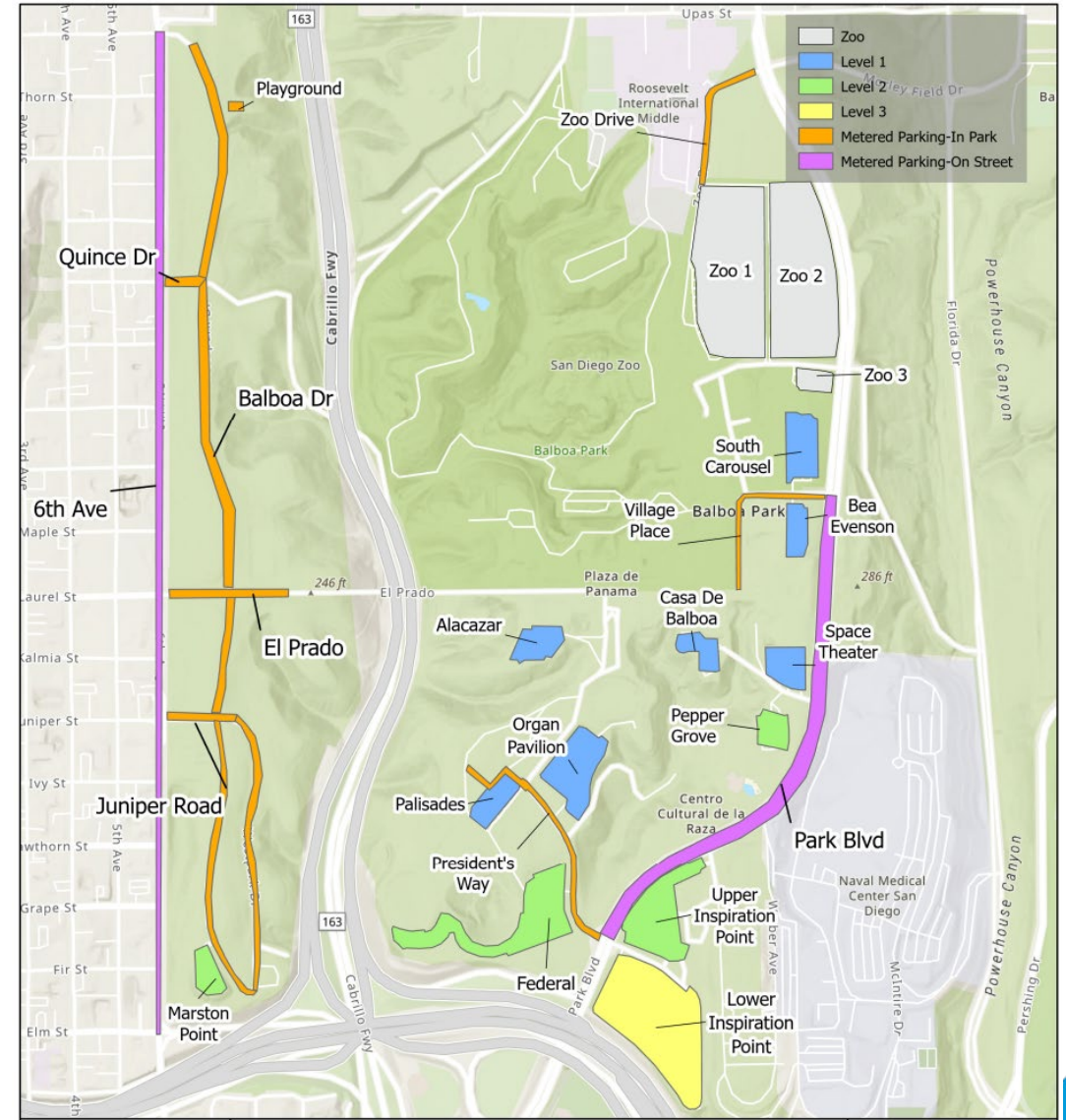
Kiosks and meters are not able to confirm residency. This program will be limited for surface lot use only.

Scheduled for **rollout in early 2026** as a three-year pilot program to allow for informal solicitation process, portal development and user testing.



Parking for Park Based Employees and Volunteers

- **Free parking** is proposed to continue to be offered for **park-based employees, nonprofit staff, contractors, and registered volunteers.**
- At this time, these individuals will be allowed to **park in Level 2, Level 3 lots, and Balboa Drive at no cost**, acknowledging their essential roles in maintaining park operations.
- **Team members who opt to park in Level 1 lots or at metered spaces** will be subject to **standard rates.**
- **Additional details are under development** to ensure secure, streamlined access while maintaining fairness and accountability.



San Diego Zoo Parking

Off Street Lots

The Zoo operates under a long-term lease (1979–2034).

The Zoo parking lot requirements and constraints are unique from other parking facilities in Balboa park and are subject to ongoing collaborative discussions between the City and the Zoo to:

1. Align contractual requirements
2. Best parking management practices
3. Create a positive user experience.

Ideally, **Zoo parking rates would align with Level 1 pricing** to maintain consistency across the Central Mesa.



Signage, Technology & Enforcement

Customer Experience

Paid parking will use **kiosk-based pay-by-plate systems**, eliminating the need for physical meter heads at each space.

Visitors will be able to **pay at kiosks**, **scan QR codes** to pay via mobile browser, or use the **ParkSmarter app** to pay and **extend time remotely**.

Parking Enforcement staff: real-time enforcement to check if the license plate is within the kiosk's database.

Wayfinding signage will be compliant with Balboa Park's wayfinding standards and designed for accessibility and clarity.

The **Treasurer's Office has ordered kiosks** for deployment, **expected to arrive before implementation**.



Revenue Allocation & Use

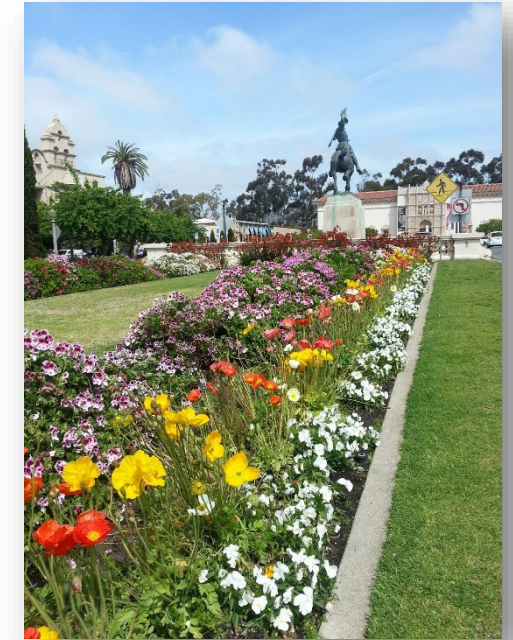
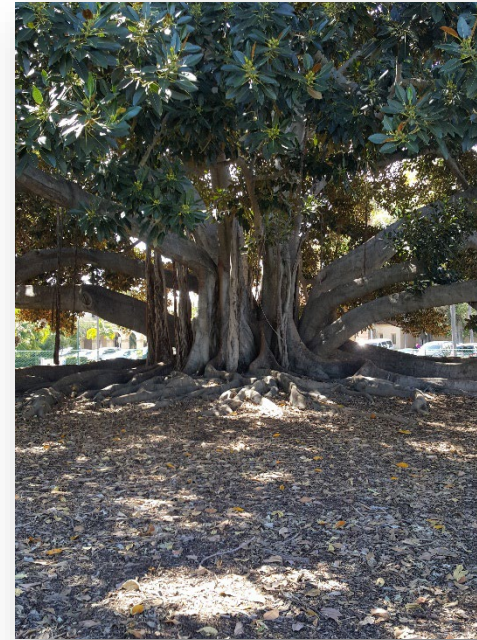
Restricted Fund Use

Per City Attorney guidance, **all revenue collected must stay within the park as a park user fee** and cannot be used for unrelated General Fund purposes.

Funds will go into a **dedicated Parking Management Fund for Balboa Park**.

Eligible uses: Balboa Park Division operations and staffing, parking management, lighting upgrades, road repairs, signage, grounds maintenance, improved tram services and security, Capital Improvement Projects, and building maintenance (*subject to existing lease agreements and Special Use Permits*).

This reinvestment structure **will help address longstanding infrastructure needs** and **improve long-term financial sustainability**.



Expanded Tram Routes

Draft Proposal

- **Goals**

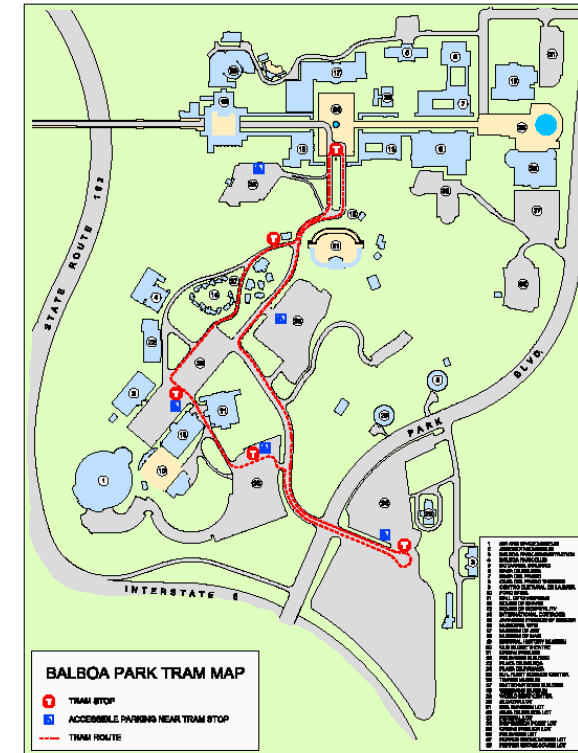
- Increase employee access to key work locations
- Reduce congestion in central park areas
- Improve connectivity between parking and key destinations

- **Service Design**

- Frequency: Input Requested (seeking community/stakeholder feedback)
- Stops: Input Requested on Tram Stop Locations (flexibility to adjust based on demand)

- **Next Steps**

- Collect public input on frequency and stops
- Evaluate operational feasibility and resource needs
- Finalize routes for implementation



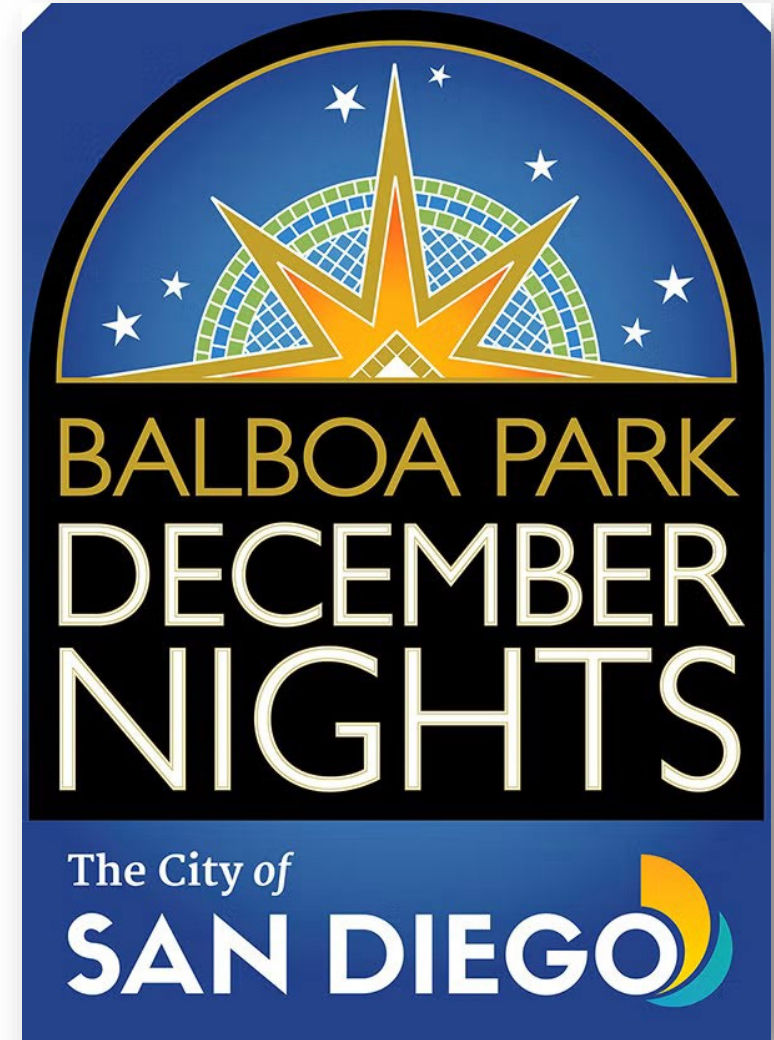
Special Events and Filming

December Nights & Others

It is proposed that **December Nights be exempt from contributing revenue to the Parking Management Fund.**

Parking fees collected during December Nights support the operation of the event itself and are collected through a third-party service. This is expected to continue through the Office of Special Events.

Special event rates and filming rates are still under review. Feedback is being actively sought to finalize a fair policy.



Communications Strategy

Various Channels

If new park user fees are approved, a robust public communications campaign will support the transition and help ensure compliance and understanding among visitors and residents.

Public Meetings: Regular presentations at the Balboa Park Committee will provide ongoing outreach to engaged stakeholders.

Signage: Highly visible signage in all affected lots to explain pricing, hours, payment methods, and rules.

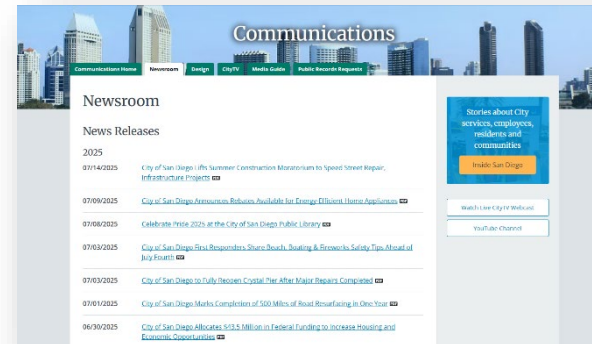
Websites: Dedicated pages on both the City and Balboa Park websites with maps, FAQs, account portal access, and support resources.

- <https://www.sandiego.gov/parking/balboapark>

Media Outreach: Press releases will be used to generate local media coverage and keep the public informed.

Social Media: City social media channels will be used for updates, reminders, and interactive education efforts.

SD Communications



The City of

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Parks & Recreation Department



Performance Measures

Data Tracking

Occupancy by Tier: Data will be gathered to assess usage and ensure parking is distributed effectively.

Resident Participation: Enrollment and usage rates in the resident discount program will be tracked to assess outreach and equity.

Revenue Tracking: Collected funds will be compared to projections to measure fiscal sustainability.

Compliance Monitoring: Citation data will inform enforcement success and identify problem areas.

Stakeholder Feedback: Community and stakeholder input will inform adjustments and improvements.

Program data will be reviewed quarterly, with **a formal 1-year evaluation report delivered to City Council.**



Performance
& Analytics



Office of the
City Treasurer

The City of
SAN DIEGO
Police Department



Department
of Finance

Key Topics for Discussion and Next Steps

Discussion Points and Feedback

- Staff welcomes input on several draft recommendations:
 - Drop off zones, curb colors and time limits, etc.
 - Tram Routes/Stops and Frequency
 - Proposed \$12 all-day rate for Level 1 lots and \$6 for Level 2 and 3 lots
 - Ending paid parking enforcement at 8 PM daily
 - Two hours of free parking at Inspiration Point (Lower).
 - Free parking for park tenants, City staff, and volunteers
 - Rate structure and rules for special events
- Staff will incorporate feedback from the Committee and the public to refine the final proposal, for City Council approval targeting **September 15th, 2025**.
- Upon approval, program rollout is scheduled for **early October** including signage, kiosk installation, and citywide communications, including website rollout.
- Resident portal activation will occur near January 2026.