

2025



# PARKS AND RECREATION EQUITY REPORT



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## ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Performance Audit of Equity in Recreation Programming 22-005
- B. Pre-Qualified Vendors Guidelines
- C. Come Play Outside 2023 Report – Feb 2024
- D. Parks After Dark Evaluation Report - Feb 2024
- E. Opportunity Fund Council Policy 700-48





# COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

## MISSION

**To provide healthy, sustainable, and enriching environments for all.**

## VISION

**To connect all to the City's diverse, world-class park system.**



The Parks and Recreation Department (Department) is committed to advancing equity by ensuring that all community members - regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, or income - have fair and full access to safe, welcoming, and inclusive parks, programs, and recreational spaces. Department staff recognize that historical and systemic barriers have limited access for many communities, and staff is dedicated to addressing these inequities through intentional planning, inclusive engagement, and equitable investment. The Department's focus is to foster a sense of belonging and well-being by creating opportunities that reflect the diversity of the City and meet the unique needs of all residents.

The Department strongly agrees that having an accessible local park system in each community is an essential service as it provides safe parks, recreational programs and green spaces that encourage greater physical activity, provide positive health benefits, strengthen community engagement, expand economic opportunity, and improve environmental quality. Historically, some communities have seen greater investment than others in their parks and recreation services. The availability and condition of the park facilities significantly impacts the City's ability to provide recreational opportunities. Therefore, it is important to make equitable investments so all communities can access and enjoy the same recreational benefits.

*"Equity is an achievable outcome when disparities are eliminated in systems, and when everyone has access to inclusive City services and resources essential to reaching opportunities and thriving in San Diego."*  
- City of San Diego Strategic Plan



# COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

The following documents serve as the key framework that have transformed the City's approach to enhancing the state of the park system.

## **Climate Equity Index (Created in 2019 and Updated in 2021)**

The Climate Equity Index (CEI) considered a variety of factors to measure the levels of access to opportunity residents have within a census tract and assess the degree of potential impacts of climate change on these areas. The CEI established the need to prioritize and allocate City resources to address deficiencies caused by historical underinvestment and other disparities. The CEI identified these historically disadvantaged areas as Communities of Concern.

## **Parks Master Plan (Adopted in 2021)**

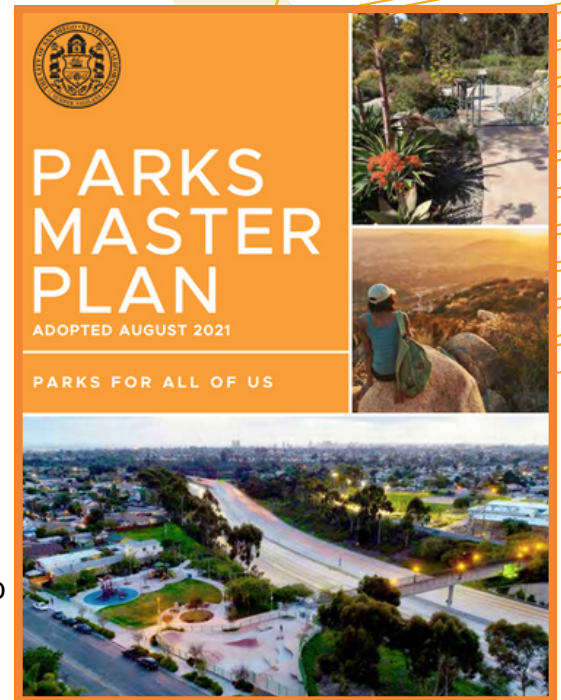
The Parks Master Plan (PMP) identifies equity as the core value of the City's parks system in which park planning and investments should address long-standing inequities in the City's parks system suffered by people that live in communities of concern and other marginalized populations allowing everyone to fairly share the same benefits from parks and attain full and equal access to recreational opportunities regardless of one's background, identity, ability, and location.

## **City's Strategic Plan (Adopted in 2022)**

Mayor Todd Gloria established the City's Strategic Plan which emphasizes equity and inclusion by taking action to create equal access to opportunity and resources via a people-centric approach that values customer service, empowerment, equity, and transparency.

## **Tactical Equity Plan (Adopted in 2023)**

The Tactical Equity Plan (TEP) is instrumental to focusing on the basics of what the Department does: maintenance/cleanliness, recreational programming, employee satisfaction/morale, employee development/diversity, and environmentally sensitive goals to align with the Climate Action Plan. The TEP suggests that more programming is needed in Communities of Concern.



# COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Adopting the guiding principles from the Park Master Plan and related documents as mentioned above, the Department identified the need for a report to examine equity and access within the City's parks, open spaces, recreation centers, aquatic complexes, and programs to assist with addressing the City's equity goals.

The Department produced its first Recreation Equity Report in 2018 and has continued to produce this report on an annual basis with the goal of obtaining performance measures that reflect progress in addressing inequities. The Department updates this report annually with the latest efforts undertaken by the Department and its many partners that work diligently to achieve equitable access to quality parks and recreational programs for all.

This year's Equity Report will detail the goals and objectives of the Department's Tactical Equity Plan, while also showcasing the Department's progress and accomplishments to date.







# TACTICAL EQUITY PLAN

This Tactical Equity Plan (TEP) emphasizes the Department's commitment to the operating principles of the Strategic Plan. The following five goals and objectives focus on park maintenance, recreation opportunities, customer service, employees, diversity and inclusion, and the Climate Action Plan that outlines the equity-based approach needed to achieve an equitable park system.

## GOAL OVERVIEW

1

Provide access to clean, safe, well-maintained parks, open space, and landscaped areas

2

Access to enjoyable, fulfilling recreational opportunities to all

3

Foster employee-centric, sustainable growth and development

4

Cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for Department employees and the public

5

Implement Climate Action Plan goals including fossil fuel use reduction, natural resource management, preservation, restoration, and tree planting





# TACTICAL EQUITY PLAN GOAL

1

Provide access to clean, safe, well-maintained parks, open space, and landscaped areas.

## OBJECTIVES

- Provide well-maintained parks.
- Provide clean parks.
- Provide safe and enjoyable access to parks.



Providing access to clean, safe, and well-maintained parks, open spaces, and landscaped areas is essential for promoting community well-being and environmental sustainability. Well-maintained, clean parks not only enhance the beauty of public spaces but also create environments where people can gather, exercise, and relax. Additionally, ensuring safe and enjoyable access to these areas encourages more people to take advantage of nature's benefits, fostering stronger connections between individuals and the outdoors. Through regular maintenance and thoughtful design, these spaces become vital resources that improve quality of life and contribute to vibrant, thriving communities.

## GOAL 1 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Philanthropy
- Key Performance Indicator (KPIs)
- Get it Done
- Capital Improvement Project
- Developer Improvement Funds
- San Diego Unified School District Joint Use Sites
- Wheelchair-Accessible Botanical Expedition



## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# PHILANTHROPY

Over the past year, San Diego has seen significant philanthropic efforts aimed at enhancing parks and recreation, particularly through initiatives led by the San Diego Parks Foundation (SDPF) and supported by various community partners. Here's an overview of key initiatives:

### San Diego Parks Foundation: Enhancing Community Spaces

The San Diego Parks Foundation collaborates closely with the Department. Their joint efforts focus on enhancing park facilities, promoting community engagement, and advocating for policies that ensure all residents have access to quality green spaces.



San Diego  
Parks Foundation

Here is an overview of their philanthropic contributions:

- **Come Play Outside Program:** Launched in partnership with the City and County of San Diego, this program offers free or heavily discounted programming at more than 20 recreation centers and aquatic centers across San Diego's southern and central neighborhoods. Participation has more than doubled from 17,000 individuals in 2021 to 30,000 in 2022.
- **Park Ambassadors Program:** This program provides youth ages 16 to 24 from low-income areas with opportunities to explore the world, challenge themselves, develop leadership skills, and gain exposure to career pathways in public service, environmental stewardship, and natural resources management. Participants engage in mentorship, community service, and civic engagement activities, preparing them for potential employment with the City of the Department.
- **Tree Planting Initiative:** In collaboration with SDG&E, SDPF has planted over 300 trees in community parks. This initiative aims to increase the urban canopy, reduce pollution, and provide shaded areas for recreation.





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# PHILANTHROPY CONTINUED

- **Parks After Dark Program:** Held each summer, SDPF plays a pivotal role in the success of the Parks After Dark program, a free summer initiative aimed at transforming neighborhood parks into vibrant community hubs. Launched in 2022, this program offers families in underserved areas access to safe, enjoyable, and enriching evening activities.
- **Citywide Sports:** Held throughout the year, SDPF significantly contributes to the Citywide Sports programs by enhancing access to organized sports and recreational activities for youth across San Diego's underserved neighborhoods. Through strategic partnerships and community-focused initiatives, SDPF aims to promote physical activity, teamwork, and community engagement.
- **I Love My Park Day:** Held each May, this event aims to strengthen community engagement, encourage environmental stewardship, and offer free, family-friendly activities. It highlights the vital role parks play in improving quality of life, promoting physical and mental well-being, and addressing issues like pollution and crime. By promoting community participation, I Love My Park Day contributes to the creation of more resilient and socially connected neighborhoods. SDPF has helped coordinate and prioritize this event, which promotes the importance in fostering community pride and involvement.



**Additional philanthropic contributions from SDPF highlighted throughout the report**





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# PHILANTHROPY CONTINUED

### Forever Balboa Park: Garden & Tree Stewardship

Forever Balboa Park (FBP) has been instrumental in supporting the maintenance and enhancement of Balboa Park through various philanthropic and volunteer-driven initiatives. Here are some of their key efforts:

FBP collaborates with the Department to maintain **over 18 gardens** within Balboa Park. The Garden Stewards program enlists volunteers to assist with routine garden maintenance, including weeding, mulching, planting, and deadheading. Volunteers also serve as garden hosts, greeting visitors and providing information about the gardens. This program not only preserves the botanical beauty of the park but also fosters a sense of community among participants.

Balboa Park boasts a diverse urban forest with **over 16,000 trees**. FBP's Tree Stewards monitor and maintain these trees, ensuring their health and longevity. The organization has planted **more than 700 trees** in the past five years and continues to support the park's urban forest through regular maintenance and expert care.







## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# PHILANTHROPY CONTINUED

### Mission Trails Regional Park

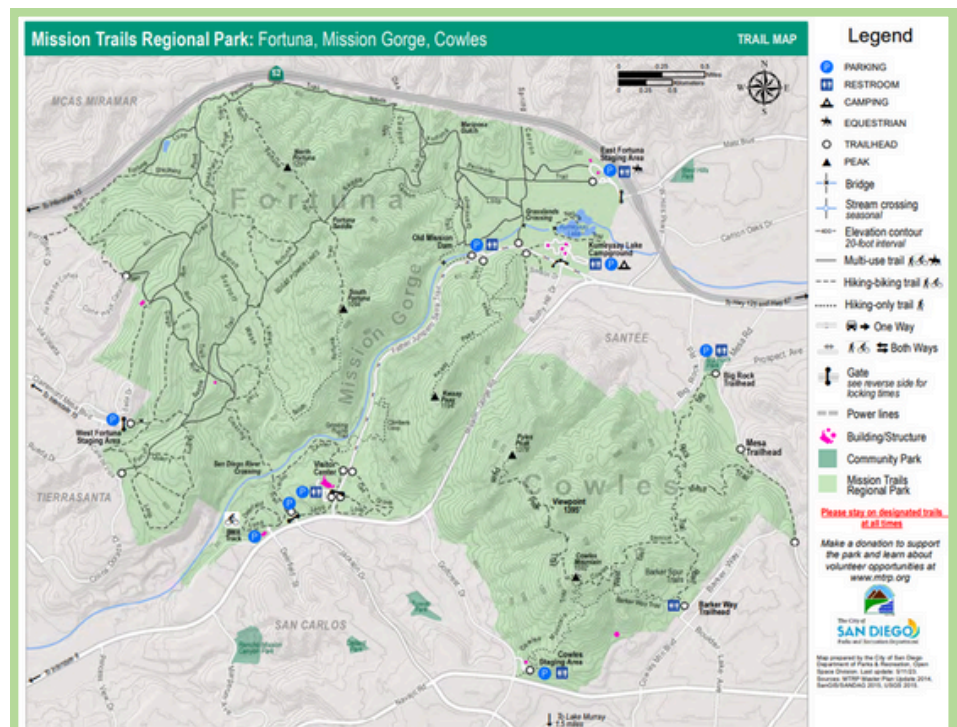
In 2024, the Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation and the City strengthened their longstanding partnership through significant conservation efforts aimed at expanding and preserving the park's natural landscape.

In July 2024, the MTRP Foundation **donated 55 acres** of privately owned land to the City, marking a milestone in their collaborative conservation initiatives. This donation, located in the East Elliott Community Planning Area north of State Route 52, aligns with the park's 2019 Mission Trails Regional Park Master Plan Update and the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), which aims to protect vital habitats for local wildlife and plant species.

The San Diego City Council unanimously approved this donation, recognizing its significance in expanding Mission Trails, one of the largest urban parks in the United States. Combined with earlier property donations, the MTRP Foundation has now contributed a **total of 108 acres** to the park.



Mission Trails  
Regional Park





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# PHILANTHROPY CONTINUED

In 2024, Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) in San Diego offered a diverse array of programs and events designed to engage visitors of all ages with nature, education, and community.

Here's an overview of some key offerings from that year:



### **Guided Nature Walks:**

MTRP provided free guided nature walks every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Participants could join a Trail Guide at the Visitor Center to explore various trails, including the Oak Grove Trail, Riverside Grinding Rocks Trail, and the Visitor Center Loop Trail. These walks offered insights into the park's history, geology, and ecology.

### **Trail Tykes Program:**

The Trail Tykes program, aimed at children aged 2 to 5, expanded in February 2024 with additional sessions. These free programs included story time, crafts, and short guided walks, fostering early connections with nature. Sessions were held every second and fourth Sunday and Monday at 10 a.m., and every Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. at the Visitor Center.

### **Eco Ambassadors Program for Teens at Mission Trails Regional Park**

The Eco Ambassadors program offers inspiring programming at the park to cohorts of 20 high school students. With the MTRP Visitor Center as their learning hub, the teens hear from speakers about different aspects of Mission Trails, explore topics related to nature and conservation, and build community around environmental stewardship. The students learn about local ecosystems, develop monitoring techniques, and collaborate with peers on projects.







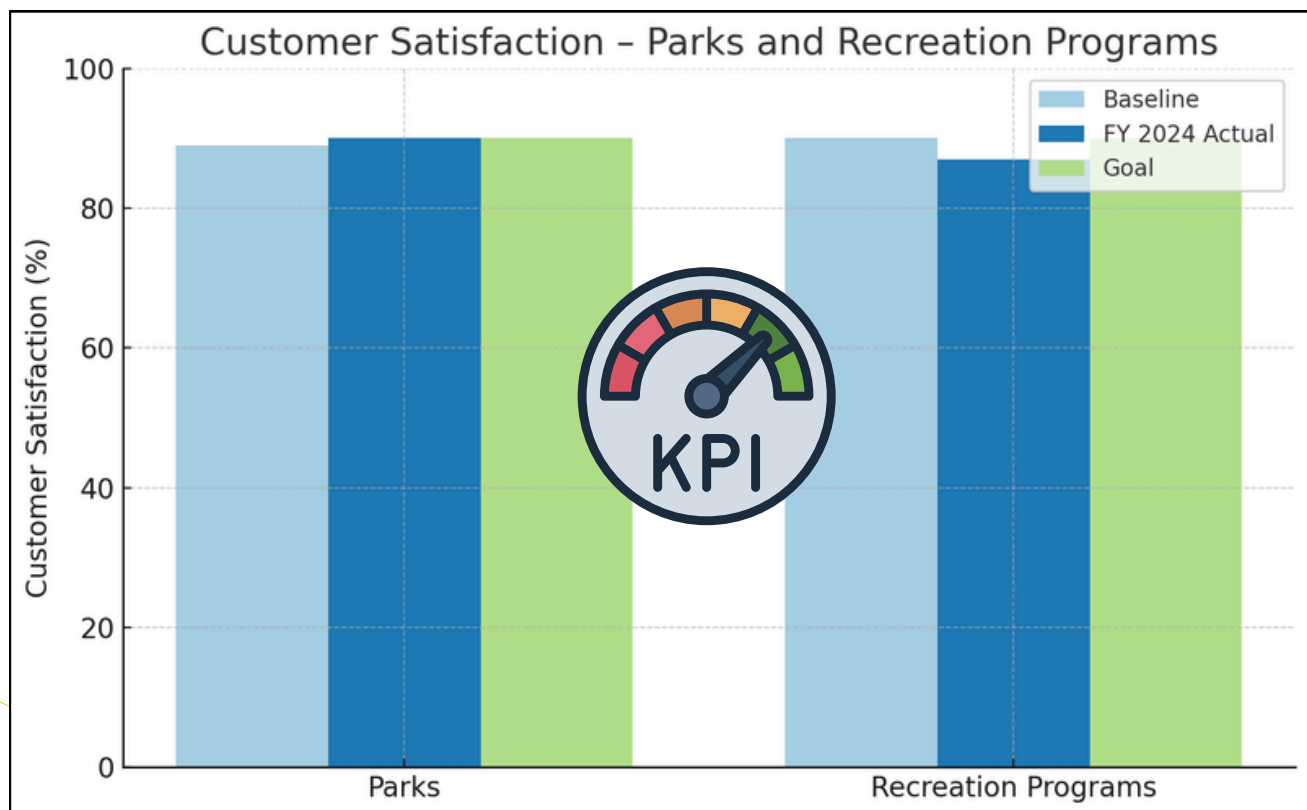
## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

To track progress and improve transparency and accountability, the Department utilizes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These metrics allow us to measure not only how effectively we are meeting operational goals, but also how well Department services are aligning with its commitment to equity, access, and environmental stewardship to provide access to clean, safe, well-maintained parks, open space, and landscaped areas.

The Department made strides in expanding community access and services in Fiscal Year 2024. Aquatic facilities welcomed over **201,000 users**, an increase from the baseline of approximately 149,000, demonstrating strong public demand and engagement despite staffing and maintenance challenges. Similarly, recreation centers operated for **over 162,000 hours**, surpassing previous years, and steadily progressing toward the department's goal of 172,432 hours. These gains underscore the Department's continued commitment to increasing service availability and creating welcoming, active spaces for all San Diego residents.

Based on annual summer surveys, the following graph shows the baseline levels of customer satisfaction, the Fiscal Year 2024 actuals and the Department Goal for the next year.





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# GET IT DONE

GET IT DONE is a tool provided by the City of San Diego to help residents report non-emergency issues and request City services through a website or mobile application. Between July 1, 2024, and April 9, 2025, the Department successfully **closed over 6,500 service cases** related to park maintenance, cleanliness, and access across the City.

### Citywide Closed Cases by Type

This table shows the total number of closed cases for each case type across all council districts. The largest volume of cases were related to **graffiti (2,509 cases)** and **general “Other” service issues (1,537 cases)**, which include miscellaneous park requests that don’t fall into predefined categories. These were followed by **illegal dumping (542)** and **trash/litter (444)**, highlighting continued demand for cleanliness-related services.

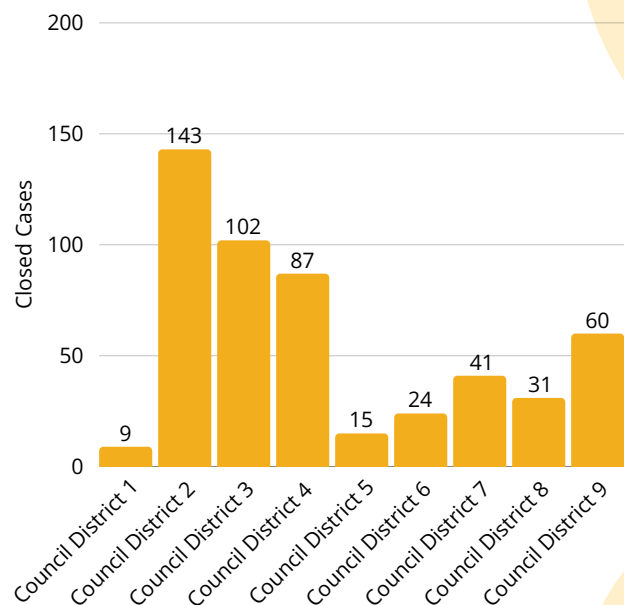
Graffiti and cleanliness-related cases make up the majority of park service activity, reinforcing the importance of environmental maintenance in supporting safe and welcoming park spaces.

| CASE TYPE                   | CLOSED CASES |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Graffiti                    | 2,509        |
| Other                       | 1,537        |
| Illegal Dumping             | 542          |
| Trash/Litter                | 444          |
| Sprinkler/Irrigation Issue  | 418          |
| Encampment                  | 356          |
| Tree Maintenance Issue      | 188          |
| Brush Management/Weeds      | 162          |
| Restroom Issue              | 146          |
| Drinking Fountain Issue     | 118          |
| Broken Playground Equipment | 95           |
| <b>TOTAL CASES</b>          | <b>6,515</b> |

## Illegal Dumping

### Closed Cases by Council District

This table highlights where illegal dumping cases were reported and resolved. **Council Districts 2 (143 cases)** and **3 (102 cases)** saw the most activity, together representing over **45%** of citywide closures in this category. Illegal dumping within parks remains a concentrated issue in urban core and coastal-adjacent communities.



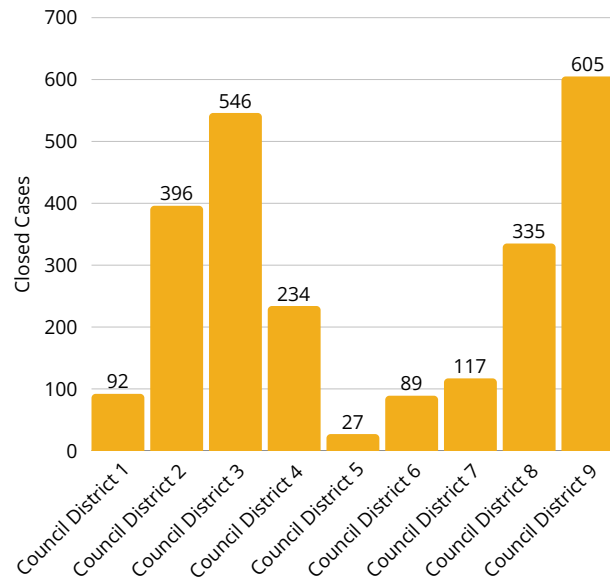


# GET IT DONE CONTINUED

## Graffiti

### Closed Cases by Council District

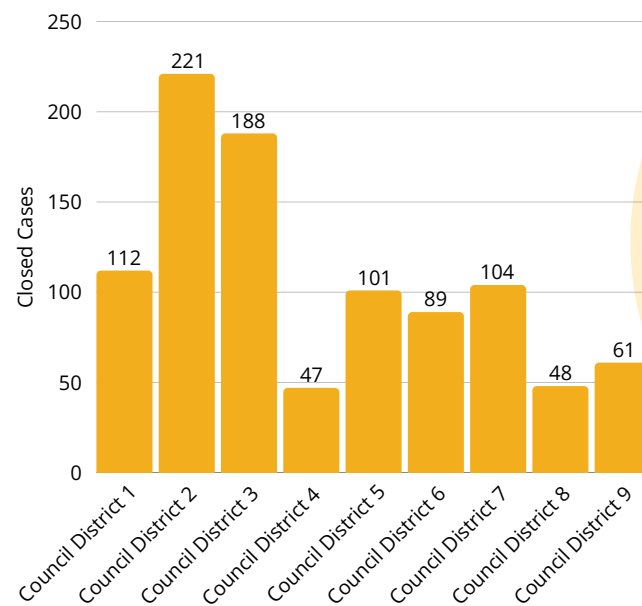
This breakdown shows **graffiti case closures** by council district. The highest totals were recorded in **District 9 (605 cases)** and **District 3 (546 cases)**—indicating areas where graffiti vandalism and tagging may be more prevalent.



## Maintenance Issues

### Closed Cases by Council District

This category aggregates all cases related to infrastructure and amenity upkeep—restrooms, drinking fountains, sprinkler systems, lighting, electrical, fencing, picnic tables, signage, and playground or exercise equipment. **Districts 2 (221 cases), 3 (188 cases), and 1 (112 cases)** had the most closures in this category.



The closure of over 6,500 cases over this nine-month period demonstrates the Department's ongoing commitment to addressing public service requests swiftly and equitably. These trends help guide resource deployment, community engagement, and infrastructure planning to ensure that all residents have access to **clean, safe, and well-maintained** parks throughout San Diego.



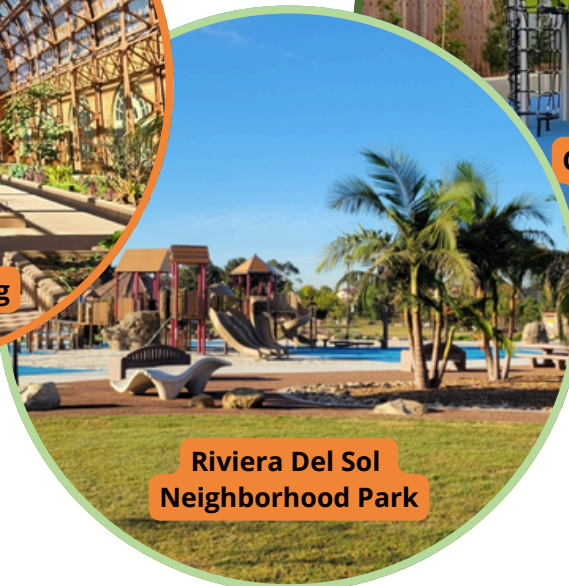


## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The City's Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) in the City of San Diego are major construction efforts aimed at building, upgrading, or replacing the city's infrastructure within parks. Managed largely by the Engineering and Capital Projects Department, these projects are part of the broader Capital Improvements Program, a long-term plan that identifies project priorities and funding sources to provide access to clean, safe, well-maintained parks, open space, and landscaped areas. The following outlines completed Fiscal Year 2024 CIP projects (with major project funding sources):

- Balboa Park Botanical Building Improvements (S20005)- \$25,499,401 (Capital Outlay-Sales Tax, Debt Funded General Fund CIP Projects, Grant Fund – State, San Diego Regional Parks Improvement Fund)
- Canon Street Park (S16047)- \$2,966,037 (Citywide Park Development Impact Fee, Debt Funded General Fund CIP Projects, Peninsula Urban Comm, and Public Art Fund)
- Clay Avenue Mini Park Upgrades (L160005)- \$2,206,215.20 (EDCO Community Fund, Southeast San Diego Urban Community, Grant Fund-Federal)
- Mountain View Sports Courts (B18192)- \$2,290,140.70 (Infrastructure Fund, Antenna Lease Revenue, Southeast San Diego Urban Community, Debt Funded General Fund CIP Projects, Capital Outlay- Misc, Grant Fund – State)
- Riviera Del Sol Neighborhood Park (S00999)- \$9,468,774.51 (Otay Mesa Facilities Benefit Assessment, Otay Mesa-West)



## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT FUNDS

On August 13, 2021, as part of a package supporting the adoption of the Parks Master Plan, City Council approved a new Citywide Park Development Impact Fee (DIF). The updated funding source is specific to parks and provides for a more equitable funding process that helps ensure everyone has access to safe, clean, and thriving park spaces. Historically, DIF fees were calculated, collected, and spent within each Community Planning Area and were restricted to the communities where the fees were collected. However, with the establishment of the Citywide Park DIF program in August 2021, funds can now be utilized across the city, allowing for more equitable distribution, and addressing the needs of park-deficient communities.

In March 2024, the City Council allocated \$15.9 million in the new Citywide Park DIF across 19 park projects with the majority of the funding going to park deficient communities and communities of concern.

The following DIF project was completed in FY24:

- John F. Kennedy Neighborhood Park Restroom and Playground Improvements (B18005)- \$4,398,114.48 (Encanto Neighborhood DIF, Grant Fund – State, Grant Fund-Federal)



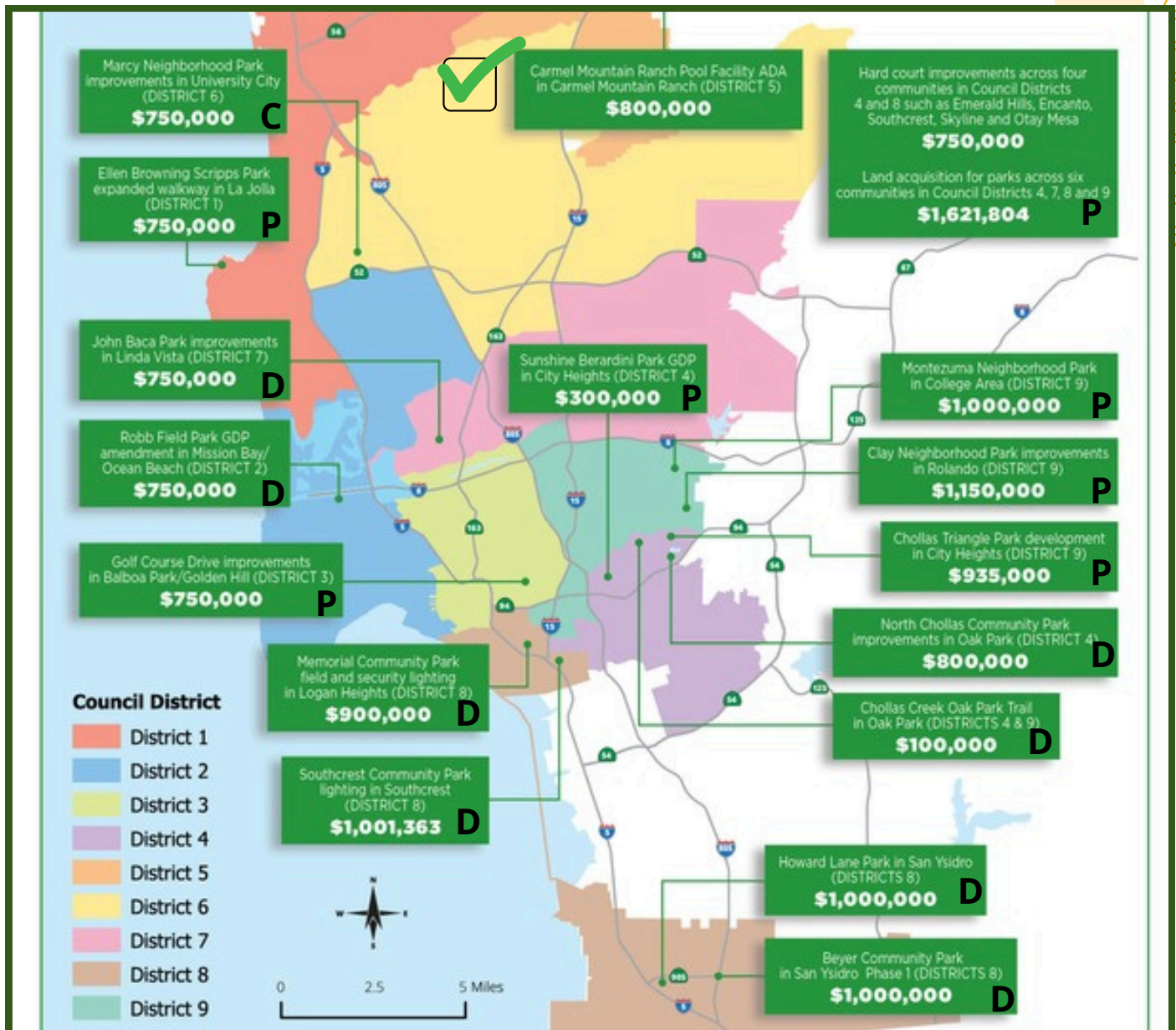
The 19 funded projects are currently in various stages, including design, engineering, bidding, or planning. These initiatives are part of a broader effort to improve and expand park facilities throughout San Diego, with over 187 existing capital improvement projects in the Department's inventory, totaling a funding need of over \$500 million.





# DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT FUNDS CONTINUED

This map identifies parks and open space locations allocated DIF funding along with status of project: **P** = Planning, **D** = Design, **C** = Construction





Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT JOINT USE SITES

The City and San Diego Unified School District have been cooperating in the joint use of numerous recreational facilities since 1948. This partnership has allowed the City to expand its park footprint by reopening the following renovated school district facilities under new joint use agreements. Over the last 5 years, 15 new joint use agreements have been signed and sites opened across the city. The following joint use facilities opened in 2024:

| Site                          | Address               | Council District | Community    | Acreage | Date Opened |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|---------|-------------|
| Wangenheim Middle/Walker Elem | 9230 Gold Coast Dr    | 6                | Mira Mesa    | 15.80   | 9/5/2024    |
| Emerson Elem                  | 1100 S 36th St        | 8                | Southeastern | 0.67    | 9/13/2024   |
| Spreckels Elem                | 6033 Stadium St.      | 6                | University   | 4.99    | 10/18/2024  |
| Clairemont Canyons Academy    | 4133 Mt Albertine Ave | 2                | Clairemont   | 3.30    | 10/30/2024  |





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 1

# WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBLE BOTANICAL EXPEDITION

In an efforts to provide safe and enjoyable access to parks, the Parks and Recreation Department hosted a wheelchair-accessible botanical expedition at the San Diego Botanic Garden. Led by Ranger Gilbert, the 1/4-mile guided tour introduced participants to native plants and their cultural uses through ethnobotany. The program was designed for all ages and mobility levels, highlighting the Department's commitment to inclusive and educational outdoor experiences.



The Department is deeply committed to providing access to clean, safe, and well-maintained parks, open spaces, and landscaped areas as a cornerstone of community well-being and environmental stewardship. Recognizing the vital role these spaces play in enhancing the physical, mental, and social health of City residents, the Department continuously invests in their care and improvement. Efforts include regular maintenance, strategic landscaping, and thoughtful design to ensure that every park and open space remains inviting, accessible, and environmentally sustainable. The Department actively monitors safety conditions and implements enhancements as needed, ensuring that these areas can be safely enjoyed by individuals and families of all ages and abilities.

In collaboration with community members, local organizations, and sustainability experts, the Department pursues initiatives that promote biodiversity, reduce environmental impact, and encourage outdoor activity. Through these ongoing actions, the Department aims to foster stronger connections between people and nature, creating vibrant, resilient public spaces that reflect the values and needs of the communities the Department serve.

# TACTICAL EQUITY PLAN GOAL

2

Access to enjoyable, fulfilling recreational opportunities to all.



## OBJECTIVES

- Serve areas in and around Climate Equity Index Communities of Concern by reducing impediments to program participation.
- Serve areas in and around Climate Equity Index Communities of Concern by marketing programs to San Diegans.
- Serve areas in and around Climate Equity Index Communities of Concern by identifying and closing gaps in services between various recreation facilities.
- Connect all San Diegans with their local park by understanding and offering desired community recreation activities, programs, and events.
- Expand digital equity by providing Wi-Fi (wireless internet) in communities.

The City is committed to provide equitable access to enjoyable and fulfilling recreational opportunities for all residents, with a focused effort on serving areas in and around Climate Equity Index Communities of Concern. This initiative aims to reduce barriers to participation in recreational programs, strategically market offerings to local residents, and identify service gaps among recreation facilities to ensure comprehensive coverage. By listening to community needs and delivering desired programs, activities, and events, the City seeks to connect all San Diegans with their neighborhood parks. Additionally, expanding digital equity through the provision of free community Wi-Fi, which was initially developed through the San Diego Parks Foundation, further supports inclusive access to resources and opportunities. The following pages will outline the various recreational accomplishments under this goal.

## GOAL 2 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Summer for All of Us - Come Play Outside
- Opportunity Funds
- Aquatics
- Citywide Sports
- AgeWell Services
- Therapeutic Recreation Services
- Civic Dance Arts





Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# SUMMER FOR ALL OF US

## Come Play Outside

Come Play Outside (CPO), launched as part of Mayor Todd Gloria's "Summer for All of Us" initiative, emerged in response to COVID-19 pandemic closures that significantly reduced physical and social activities among San Diego youth.

In 2024, three years after extended pandemic-related closures, recreation centers began revitalizing their programs through this dedicated initiative in partnership with the San Diego Parks Foundation. CPO has remained steadfast in offering youth and adults opportunities to participate in outdoor activities, connect with others, and enhance their well-being in a safe environment. These ongoing programs have helped maintain a sense of normalcy, especially for children and families facing economic hardships or limited resources. Since its inception, CPO has **reached over 153,733 individuals, including youth, adults, and seniors**. By fostering physical activity, creative play, and social connections, CPO plays a crucial role in rebuilding community engagement and mitigating the lasting effects of pandemic-related restrictions. Its success highlights the importance of inclusivity in community development, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to thrive in a supportive, engaging space.

The Summer for All of Us - Come Play Outside initiative, includes a variety of funding, activities and events. The program is committed to ensuring that every individual, regardless of background or resources, has equal access to recreational opportunities.



Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# SUMMER FOR ALL OF US CONTINUED

## Funding & Partnership

Sustainable funding and strong partnerships are the backbone of equitable recreational programming—ensuring that all communities, especially those historically underserved, have access to safe, inclusive, and empowering spaces where everyone can thrive. Thank you to various partners and funders whose commitment and support make this vital work possible. The San Diego Parks Foundation has been instrumental in helping to secure private funding and provide needed support for these programs. CPO programs and events are made possible through dedicated City funding, grants, and donations that support free to low-cost activities. In 2024, the CPO program secured **\$2,192,000** in funding, a **36%** increase from the previous year. These additional funds allowed for a **13%** growth in programs and events, which resulted in a **15%** rise in attendance from the prior year. These investments enhance community engagement and expand opportunities for participation in CPO activities.

**Funding for CPO was provided through the following partnerships:**





Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# SUMMER FOR ALL OF US CONTINUED

## Parks After Dark

In 2022, the Department was awarded a **\$2.5 million** County of San Diego grant to launch the Parks After Dark (PAD) program over a **five-year term (2022-2026)**, with the objective to decrease crime rates while activating parks in the evening hours via multi-generational family engagement.



**2024**  
**PARKS**  
**AFTER DARK**  
**37,269**  
Total Participants

Now in its third year, PAD hosted an impressive **111 events** during the summer of 2024 at five locations. These events took place every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday for a span of five to eight weeks, offering a diverse range of activities for people of all ages. The program successfully attracted over **37,269 participants**.

The City, San Diego Parks Foundation, and Feeding San Diego partnered to distribute meals, desserts, and fresh produce to underserved communities, while also offering vital resources such as health screenings, voter registration assistance, and mental health support. This holistic approach not only addressed immediate hunger but also empowered families with tools for long-term well-being and access to essential services.



**Food Distribution**  
**49,300**  
Meals and Desserts  
**102,108 lbs.**  
Dry Goods & Fresh Produce





# SUMMER FOR ALL OF US CONTINUED

## Movies in the Park

The Summer Movies in the Park program provided families with an ideal chance to unwind and enjoy a movie in their local park. Launched in 2007 as a 'take back our parks' initiative, this program encouraged residents to explore their nearby county and city parks through a free and secure evening event. This popular community activity helped prevent inappropriate after-hours use and loitering, allowing residents to feel safe in their local parks, which ultimately promoted future visits.

A total of **29 movies** were showcased at locations within Communities of Concern, accompanied by a range of pre-show activities such as crafts, face painting, inflatables, food vendors, and much more! The San Diego Parks Foundation enhanced **16 screenings** with an inflatable play jumpers, kettle corn and ice cream.



With an impressive overall attendance of **5,743**, Movies in the Park remains a beloved and successful **FREE** family activity for many!

SUMMER  
MOVIES  
IN THE  
PARK



Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# SUMMER FOR ALL OF US CONTINUED

## Participation by Council District

| Council Districts | Number of Participants |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 3                 | 1,580                  |
| 4                 | 15,609                 |
| 7                 | 10,092                 |
| 8                 | 21,550                 |
| 9                 | 11,934                 |

Summer programs demonstrated strong community engagement across San Diego's Council Districts, serving a total of **49,761 residents**.

Each district offered a variety of popular programs including Movies in the Park, Summer Day Camp, Teen Nite, and Deep Sea Fishing, with many districts also providing specialized activities such as **Nature Camp, Specialty Camps, SNAG Golf, Parks After Dark, and Learn to Swim programs**. These participation statistics highlight CPO's continuing success in reaching historically under resourced communities and providing equitable access to recreational opportunities that support physical and social well-being.

Below is an outline of the overall progression of the programs and participation numbers of the Summer for all of us - Come Play Outside program over the last four years.





Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# SUMMER FOR ALL OF US CONTINUED

## Summary of Programs and Events

| Year                                      | 2021        |        | 2022        |        | 2023        |        | 2024        |        |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| Funding                                   | \$1,810,000 |        | \$1,862,600 |        | \$1,566,766 |        | \$2,129,000 |        |
| P = # of programs<br>A = Attendance total | P           | A      | P           | A      | P           | A      | P           | A      |
| Day Camps                                 | 28          | 400    | 105         | 2,008  | 121         | 1,968  | 123         | 2,807  |
| Specialty Camps                           | 36          | 500    | 30          | 409    | 43          | 678    | 33          | 1,008  |
| Nature Camps                              | 17          | 334    | 17          | 288    | 16          | 281    | 16          | 333    |
| Teen Nite                                 | 120         | 6,394  | 120         | 8,553  | 80          | 6,062  | 60          | 3,513  |
| Parks After Dark                          | --          | --     | 96          | 18,175 | 96          | 32,559 | 111         | 37,269 |
| Learn to Swim                             | 116         | 1,180  | 147         | 941    | 153         | 1,510  | 240         | 4,996  |
| Movies in the Park                        | 30          | 4,900  | 39          | 5,113  | 34          | 5,470  | 29          | 5,743  |
| Deep Sea Fishing Trips                    | 3           | 150    | 4           | 200    | 4           | 200    | 5           | 250    |
| Totals                                    | 350         | 13,858 | 558         | 35,687 | 547         | 48,728 | 617         | 55,919 |

Each year, the Department strives to expand its reach and grow sustainable programming that positively impacts lives across all communities in the City. The ongoing goal is to meet people where they are, responding to their unique needs with inclusive, accessible, and meaningful recreational opportunities.

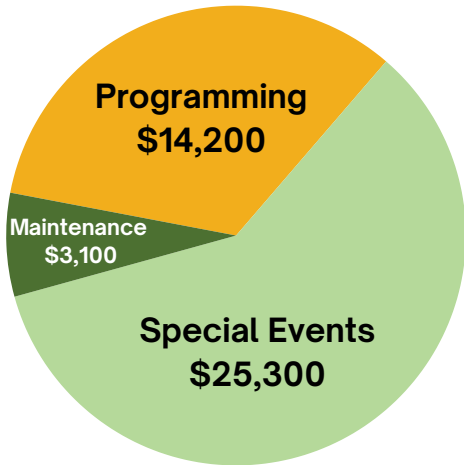




## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# OPPORTUNITY FUND

This section highlights all **11 Recreation Centers** that received Opportunity Funds in Fiscal Year 2025 and how these funds were, or plan to be, utilized for programming, special events, and maintenance needs. This year's funds brought each Recreation Center Fund up to a **baseline budget of \$50,000**. City Heights was an exception to this as they received the remainder of available funds, bringing their budget to \$21,559.

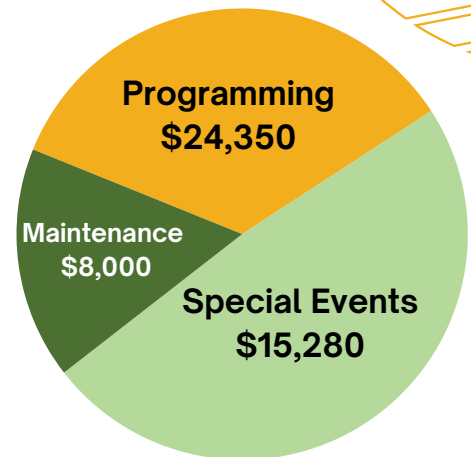


### Azalea Recreation Center - \$50,000

- Low-cost seasonal day camps with field trips
- Programs
  - Coding, art, robotics, and sports classes
  - Teen programs and field trips
- Free community events
  - Fall Carnival, Movie in the Park, Spring Egg Hunt, and Snow Day
- Facility improvements
  - New sink for activity room

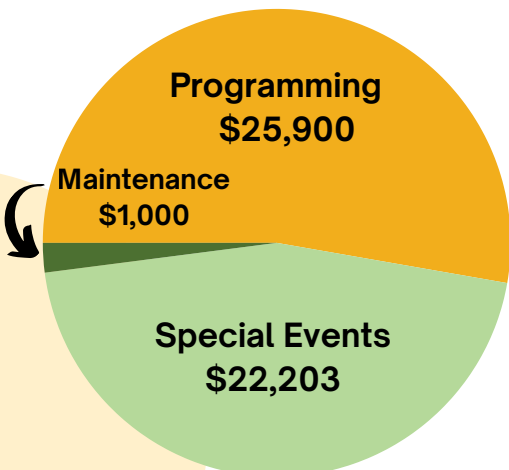
### Bay Terraces - \$50,000

- Youth programs
  - Cooking, summer camp, field trips, yoga, dance
- Free community events
  - Spring Egg Hunt, Movies in the Park, Polynesian Youth Showcase
- Senior programs and events
  - Line dancing, bingo, cooking, crafts, field trips
- Facility improvements
  - New tables and chairs, tilt truck



### Cesar Solis - \$50,000

- Summer and fall skate camps
- Free community events
  - Spring Egg Hunt, Movies in the Park, Halloween, End of School Event
- Facility improvements
  - Sports equipment, replacement soccer nets
  - Field fertilizer

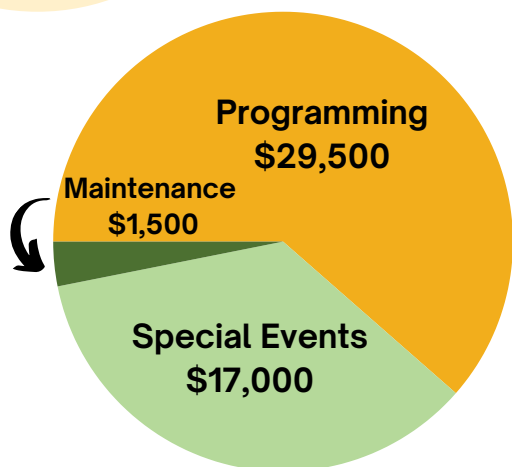




## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# OPPORTUNITY FUND

### CONTINUED

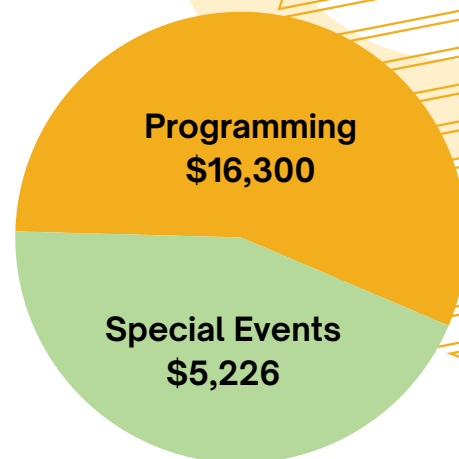


### Colina Del Sol - \$50,000

- Low-cost seasonal day camps with field trips
- Youth programs
  - Crafts, ceramics, cheer, futsal, flag football
- Free community events
  - Halloween, Winter Wonderland, Spring Egg Hunt, Movie in the Park

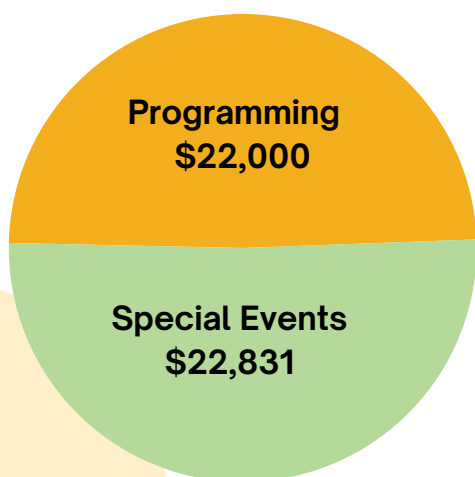
### City Heights - \$21,559

- Low-Cost day camp and field trips
- Free community events
  - Halloween Carnival, Spring Egg Hunt, Movies in the Park, and Summer Kick-Off
- Youth programs and equipment
  - STEM classes, futsal equipment, sports awards, cooking classes
- Senior Bingo Nights



### Mountain View - \$50,000

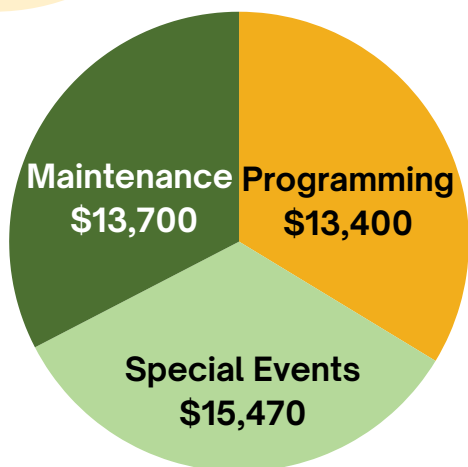
- Low-cost seasonal day camps with field trips
- End of season banquets for basketball, volleyball, futsal, drone soccer and soccer
- Teen Nite events
- Free community events
  - Juneteenth, Spring Egg Hunt, two Movies in the Park, Halloween Carnival, Winter Wonderland
- Cooking, Arts & Crafts
- Facility improvements
  - Upgraded Teen Center



Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# OPPORTUNITY FUND

CONTINUED

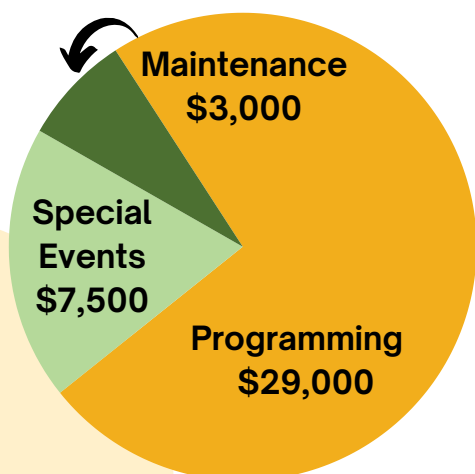
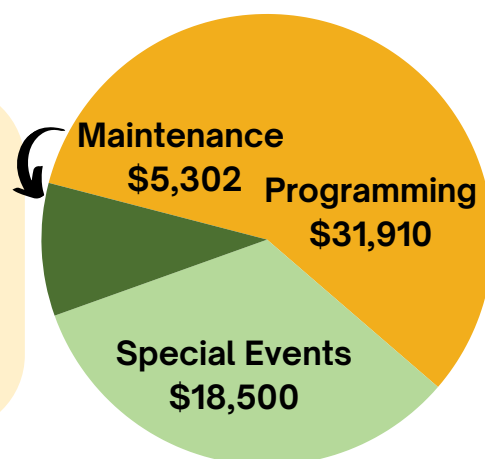


## Park de la Cruz - \$50,000

- Low-cost skate camp
- Free community events
  - Fall Carnival, Winter Carnival, Spring Egg Hunt, Movies in the Park, Volleyball Banquet
- Supplies for Toys for Tots
- Equipment and uniforms for youth sports
- Facility improvements
  - Basketball floors resurfaced
  - Gym sound installation

## Skyline Hills - \$50,000

- Low-cost seasonal day camps with field trips
- Youth programs
  - Stay Dance, Cooking Class, Soccer
- Free community events
  - Snow Day, Spring Egg Hunt, Halloween Carnival, Parks After Dark
- Facility improvements
  - Gym floor, fitness room and field renovations



## Southcrest - \$50,000

- Low-cost seasonal day camps with field trips
- End of season banquets for basketball, volleyball, futsal and soccer
- Teen Nite events
- Free community events
  - Spring Egg Hunt, SpookCrest, Churros with the Grinch
- Facility improvements
  - Upgraded Gym Floors
  - Portable Shooting and Rebound Basketball Machine

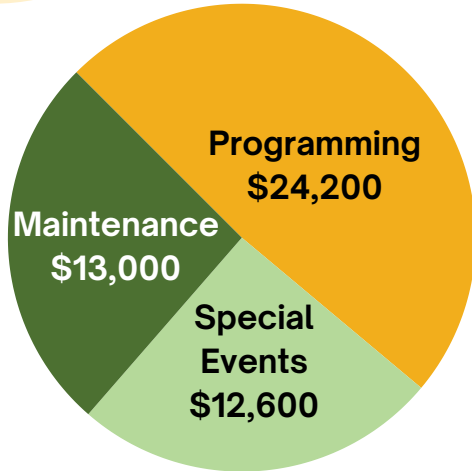




Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# OPPORTUNITY FUND

CONTINUED

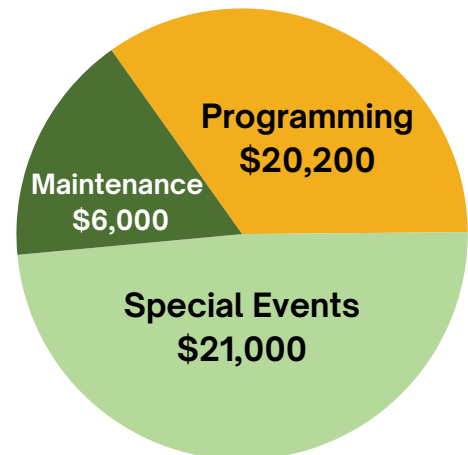


## Stockton - \$50,000

- Low-cost seasonal day camps and field trips
- Youth programming
  - Art and STEM classes
- Free community events
  - Winter Breakfast, Spring Egg Hunt
- Teen Program – 3 field trips
- Facility improvements
  - Ping pong, air hockey and foosball tables
  - Chairs, tables and carts for events

## Willie Henderson - \$50,000

- Low-cost summer day camps with field trips
- End of Season banquets for basketball, volleyball, drone soccer/racing and soccer
- Free community events
  - Spring Egg Hunt, Winter Wonderland, Halloween Carnival
- Facility improvements
  - Seeding, fertilizer, turf renovations





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# AQUATICS

The Department offers a comprehensive Aquatic Program, providing a variety of water-based activities and services for all ages and skill levels. These programs are available at the City's 15 public pools and are designed to promote water safety, physical fitness, and community engagement.

These Aquatic programs have expanded through strategic partnerships and funding initiatives. Through the American Red Cross Centennial Campaign, **swimming lessons were extended to over 550 participants** at City Heights and Martin Luther King Jr. Pools, supported by \$20,000 in annual funding for the next three years.

Educational outreach has grown with partnerships across **18 schools** serving more than **1,000 students**. The Prevent Drowning Foundation of San Diego provided **\$62,000** for programming at six sites and an additional **\$25,000** to enhance swimming lessons at seven locations citywide. To enhance accessibility, the City has expanded its "Schools to Pools" initiative, offering free swim lessons during school hours in low-income neighborhoods. This program aims to remove barriers such as transportation and after-school scheduling conflicts, ensuring more children have the opportunity to learn water safety skills. This program, serving more than **2,000 students** at 12 schools, building essential water safety skills for thousands of San Diego youth. In addition, the innovative water safety initiatives include the "Bridge to the Pool" program, reaching over 100 students across five schools.





Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# AQUATICS CONTINUED

Aquatics programming is designed to reach participants of all ages and abilities. Last year the City hosted **12 swim meets** and **8 water polo games** which reached over **400 participants**. The weekly schedule included **47 water fitness classes**. There are also opportunities available for parents to participate in CPR/AED training courses, along with free parent and toddler workshops to promote family involvement and safety awareness.



One of the City's targeted educational initiatives launched a P.E. program at Crawford High School that provided water competency skills for academic credit. In addition, the Department coordinated **scholarships for 36 youth** in the San Diego Junior Lifeguard program, while **\$10,000 in SDPF funding** supported Parks after Dark Pool events at Memorial and City Heights. These efforts were enhanced through partnerships with community organizations including Ocean Discovery, Kupanda, Refugee Net, and STAR/PAL.

Through the Department's Low Income Fee Waiver program, the Aquatics Division **subsidized an estimated \$31,215** for eligible participants to attend free swimming lessons for all ages and the American Red Cross Centennial Water Competency Course.

"Every child deserves the chance to learn how to swim—not just for fun, but for safety, confidence, and survival. Water safety education must be accessible to all communities, because every life matters equally."

-Nicole McNeil, Assistant Deputy Director







## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# CITYWIDE SPORTS

The Department offers a wide variety of youth sports programs year-round at recreation centers throughout the City. Available sports include basketball, soccer, volleyball, futsal, softball, and flag football. In 2024, cheer was introduced as a new program and received strong participation. These programs are designed to introduce children to organized sports in a positive and supportive setting. With a focus on affordability, they provide youth with valuable opportunities to stay physically active, build skills, and foster social connections.



To support the organization and management of youth sports leagues, the Department established the Youth Sports Committee. As a Recognized Member Organization of the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS), the Department upholds national standards for youth sports programming. In 2024, the Youth Sports Committee coordinated seven coaching and officiating training sessions, as well as seven citywide tournaments. Participation grew by 32% compared to the previous year, with a total of **528 teams and 5,702 youth participants**. The following section provides a detailed breakdown of participation by sport and age group.

| 2024 SPORTS   | PEE WEE | 10 & UNDER | 12 & UNDER | 14 & UNDER | 16 & UNDER | TEAMS TOTAL | PARTICIPANT TOTAL |
|---------------|---------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|
| BASKETBALL    | 47      | 64         | 50         | 37         | 4          | 202         | 2,100             |
| SOCCER        | 33      | 33         | 20         | 9          | 5          | 100         | 1,268             |
| VOLLEYBALL    | 0       | 4          | 23         | 32         | 12         | 71          | 660               |
| FUTSAL        | 16      | 22         | 19         | 10         | 4          | 71          | 653               |
| SOFTBALL      | 0       | 0          | 7          | 6          | 0          | 13          | 182               |
| CHEER         | 3       | 4          | 0          | 3          | 0          | 10          | 107               |
| FLAG FOOTBALL | 15      | 20         | 18         | 6          | 2          | 61          | 732               |
| TOTAL         | 114     | 147        | 137        | 98         | 27         | 528         | 5,702             |



**Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2**

# AGEWELL SERVICES

AgeWell Services (AWS) is dedicated to improving the quality of life for older adults by offering a wide range of programs and services focused on social engagement, recreation, health and wellness, education, community enrichment, and volunteer opportunities. The organization's mission is to support individuals aged 60 and older in maintaining social connections, pursuing lifelong learning, expressing creativity, enhancing physical health, and achieving a fulfilling and successful aging experience.

In alignment with the Age-Friendly San Diego Action Plan, AgeWell Services (AWS) has continued to expand its offerings across the City. Currently, 15 centers provide specialized programs tailored to the needs and interests of older adults. These programs include a diverse selection of classes in arts and crafts, cooking, gardening, health and fitness, dance, music, and theater. AWS also organizes special events and day trips to local attractions, fostering community engagement.

The Department is meeting heightened demand for older adult programming by increasing the number of senior facilities:

## Dedicated Senior facilities:

|                                        |                   |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Balboa Park Senior Lounge              | Opened in 2005    |
| Bay Terraces Community & Senior Center | Opened in 2023    |
| Cathy Hopper Friendship Center         | Re-opened in 2023 |
| Memorial Senior Center                 | Re-opened in 2024 |
| Park De La Cruz Community Center       | Opened in 2020    |
| San Ysidro Senior Center               | Opened in 2024    |





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# AGEWELL SERVICES CONTINUED

### Key Programs and Services:

**Senior Lunch Program:** In partnership with Serving Seniors, AgeWell Services provides nutritious, hot lunches at no cost to eligible seniors at Bay Terraces Community Center, Memorial Senior Center, and Park de la Cruz Community Center. In 2024, AWS assisted in providing **over 35,000 meals to seniors**.

**Senior Lounge:** The Balboa Park Senior Lounge offers a welcoming space for seniors to relax, socialize, and enjoy complimentary coffee or tea. It operates Tuesdays through Saturdays, with hours varying by season.

**Technology Training:** Through the Access 4 All Tech Training program, AgeWell Services, in collaboration with the San Diego Futures Foundation, offers free in-person technology classes for seniors. These classes cater to all skill levels and provide devices for those in need.

**Social Calls:** To combat isolation, AgeWell Services offers a free Social Call program where staff check in with seniors up to three times a week. This service provides a compassionate voice and connects seniors to additional resources.

**Special Events and Activities:** AgeWell Services organizes various events, including talent shows, art and photo contests, dances, and craft sales. These events foster community engagement and provide opportunities for seniors to showcase their talents and creativity.

**Volunteer Opportunities:** Seniors can participate in volunteer roles, assisting with events and activities, thereby contributing to the community and staying active.

**Newsletter:** A quarterly publication, "The Scroll" provides information on recreation, health, wellness opportunities, and community resources for adults aged 60 and older.







# AGEWELL SERVICES

CONTINUED

## 2024 Highlights

### Annual Talent Show

The 48th Annual AgeWell Services Talent Show highlighted the diverse talents of more than **50 seniors** aged 60 and older. Attended by over **150 guests**, the event featured a dynamic lineup of performances, including singing, dancing, and other acts that reflected the creativity and enthusiasm of the senior community. With a "Golden Age of Hollywood" theme, participants embraced the era through costumes and classic routines. Beyond entertainment, the show promoted community engagement and social connection among San Diego's older adults.



### Memorial Senior Center Grand Opening

The Memorial Senior Center in Logan Heights celebrated its official grand opening on March 28, 2025, with a ceremony attended by Mayor Todd Gloria, Councilmember Vivian Moreno, and over 100 community members. The center offers a wide range of free or low-cost activities for adults 60 and older, including dance classes, karaoke, and gardening. Free weekday lunches are also provided in partnership with Serving Seniors.



### Fitness Festival

The inaugural Fitness Festival and resource fair aimed to support older adults in maintaining and improving their physical health through safe and effective methods. The event featured resources from internal departments, such as the Aquatics Division, and external partners, including the San Diego Senior Games. Over 75 seniors had the opportunity to connect with local fitness providers, learn about exercise programs tailored for seniors, and discover community resources that support active lifestyles.



## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# THERAPEUTIC RECREATION SERVICES

The City's Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS) program, managed by the Department, offers inclusive recreational opportunities for individuals with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. Established in 1972, TRS has served over **50,000 residents annually**, providing programs designed to enhance physical, cognitive, and social functioning for participants aged 3 and up.

### Mission Statement

TRS is committed to providing innovative, inclusive, accessible, and affordable recreation programs that enhance the health, well-being, and quality of life for individuals of all ability levels.

### Program Goals

Under the guidance of Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists, TRS aims to:

- **Enhance Physical Functioning:** Through adaptive sports and recreational activities that promote mobility, strength, and endurance.
- **Improve Cognitive Abilities:** By offering programs that stimulate mental engagement and learning.
- **Foster Social Interaction:** Creating opportunities for individuals to build relationships and develop social skills.
- **Support Emotional Well-being:** Providing a safe and supportive environment that encourages self-expression and confidence.

These goals are achieved through a variety of programs tailored to different age groups and abilities, ensuring that all participants can benefit from TRS offerings.







Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# THERAPEUTIC RECREATION SERVICES

## CONTINUED

### Program Overview:

**Adaptive Sports & Recreation:** TRS offers activities such as wheelchair basketball, handcycling, and adaptive surfing, promoting health and fitness among individuals with physical disabilities.

**Age-Specific Groups:** Programs are tailored to various age groups, including:

- **Kid Zone (ages 3-12):** Focuses on socialization and skill development through play.
- **Kick Back Club (ages 13-17):** Encourages leisure opportunities and friendship-building.
- **Social Motion Club (ages 18+):** Focuses on building social skills through recreational activities.
- **Leisure Seekers (ages 18+):** Supports adults recovering from mental or behavioral health conditions through leisure activities.
- **Independent Club (ages 21+):** Promotes independence and socialization through experiential activities.

**Inclusion Aides:** These aides assist individuals with disabilities in participating in neighborhood recreation center programs by providing tailored support and staff training.

**Beach Accessibility Program:** Provides specialized wheelchairs at Mission Beach, enabling individuals with mobility impairments to access the sand independently.

**Volunteer & Internship Opportunities:** TRS relies on volunteers, contributing over 20,000 service hours annually, and offers internships for students pursuing degrees in therapeutic recreation.







Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# THERAPEUTIC RECREATION SERVICES

CONTINUED

## 2024 Highlights

### Harvest Ball

The 40th Annual Harvest Ball hosted **285 adults** with disabilities at the Bahia Resort, marking the first hotel event since COVID-19. TRS partnered with the Disabled Services Advisory Council (DSAC) to fundraise and reduce admission costs. The event provided a rare and accessible prom-like experience for individuals who often miss such opportunities. TRS also worked with a local charity to provide dresses and arranged discounted accommodations to increase accessibility.

### Adaptive Golf Tournament

Hosted by TRS and Torrey Pines Golf Course, the tournament provided an inclusive opportunity for **30 individuals** with disabilities to enjoy golf in a supportive environment. The event featured adaptive equipment and tailored support to accommodate various abilities, promoting physical activity, social interaction, and skill development. Participants of all experience levels were welcomed, fostering community engagement and enhancing quality of life through recreational sport.

### Summer Camps

These camps reflect TRS's dedication to enriching the lives of individuals with disabilities through personalized activities led by Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists.

- KZ Adventure Camp (ages 6–13): Provided **34 campers** with the opportunity to explore various fun spots around San Diego through daily field trips.
- Camp at the Bay (ages 13+): TRS partnered with Mission Bay Aquatic Center to offer **60 campers** kayaking, sailing, marine science, plus stand-up paddleboarding, handcycling, sports, games, and crafts.
- Camp Wet and Wild (ages 13+): In collaboration with AmpSurf, the camp provided **60 campers** with four days of adaptive surfing, along with yoga, paddleboarding, games, and a field trip to SeaWorld.





Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# CIVIC DANCE



Established in 1942, the City's Civic Dance Arts program, with support from the San Diego Civic Dance Association, provides accessible, high-quality dance education to participants of all ages and skill levels. In 2024, the program offered a total of **404** classes across **22** recreation centers and Balboa Park facilities, serving **6,261** participants. To promote equitable access, the program waives fees for eligible individuals through the Low-Income Fee Waiver Program, which granted a total of **\$49,705** in waived fees during the year.

## Program Overview:

- **Dance Styles Offered:** The program provides instruction in various dance disciplines, including jazz, tap, ballet, modern, hip hop, and musical theater.
- **Class Levels:** Courses range from beginner to pre-professional levels, accommodating dancers at different stages of their journey.
- **Annual Performances:** Students have the opportunity to participate in annual recitals held at the Casa del Prado Theater in Balboa Park, showcasing their skills and progress.
- **San Diego Civic Dance Company:** An advanced performing group that offers additional performance opportunities for dedicated dancers.
- **Community Engagement:** The program emphasizes community involvement and provides a platform for individuals to express themselves through dance. In 2024, it hosted **48 community events**, attracting more than **14,000 attendees**.

With a commitment to fostering a love for dance and promoting physical activity, the Civic Dance Arts program continues to be a valuable resource for the San Diego community.





Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 2

# CIVIC DANCE CONTINUED



## 2024 Highlights

### Collage

The Civic Dance Arts Program's Collage is the premier annual performance event. Originating in the 1980s in response to growing interest in youth arts, the San Diego Civic Dance Company was formed from top-level students selected through audition. Today, Collage features performances by the Civic Dance Company, T-Troupe (Junior Company), Young Adult Ensemble, and Adult Ensemble. Held over three weekends, the production includes 11 public shows, one school performance for San Diego Unified, and features 72 dancers supported by hundreds of volunteers. The show has won the Bravo Award for Best Dance Show in San Diego three consecutive years.



### December Nights

San Diego Civic Dance Arts hosts a festive two-day holiday event in the Casa del Prado courtyard, transformed into a winter wonderland with lights, dancing, treats, and photo ops with Santa and his elves. The celebration features nine evening performances by the program's top-level companies—T-Troupe, Young Adult Ensemble, Adult Ensemble, and Company—including the signature "We Need a Little Christmas" number. Three daytime shows showcase recreation-level dancers ages 4 to 18 from various community centers. The event draws over 6,000 attendees and features hundreds of performers.





# TACTICAL EQUITY PLAN GOAL

3

Foster employee-centric, sustainable growth and development.

## OBJECTIVES

- Compensate employees at rates at or above average for various governmental agencies within San Diego County.
- Create innovative ways to recognize and reward exceptional performance and special projects.
- Improve recruitment and retention efforts and create a desirable and attainable workforce.

The Department aims to promote sustainable growth by prioritizing employee well-being and development. It commits to offering competitive compensation, meeting or exceeding the average pay rates of government agencies in San Diego. Additionally, it seeks to implement innovative recognition and reward systems to honor exceptional performance and contributions. Efforts will also focus on enhancing recruitment and retention strategies to build a capable, motivated, and attractive workforce. The following pages will showcase the Department's exciting progress and accomplishments so far.

## ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Back to Work SD
- Park Ambassador
- Recruitment & Retention
- Trainings
- Heart of Service
- Vendor Recruitment



### Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3

# BACK TO WORK SD

As part of the Californians for All initiative, the City was awarded an \$18.5 million grant to launch the Employ and Empower program. This initiative aimed to boost youth employment and cultivate the next generation of public servants. In collaboration with the Human Resources Department, the City targeted to hire **1,000 interns** over a three-year period, providing youth and young adults with hands-on experience in civic engagement and career pathways within San Diego.

The Department has already made significant progress, hiring **71 interns** in Fiscal Year 2024 and **70** in Fiscal Year 2025. The program targets individuals aged 16 to 30 who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Difficulty securing employment
- Low income
- Unemployed and/or out of school
- Currently or formerly justice-involved
- Transitioning from foster care
- Engaged with the mental health or substance use system

The program's overarching goal is to support participants in securing employment, enrolling in academic programs, or entering job training within one year of participation—ideally leading to careers in public service. By introducing young people to opportunities in parks and recreation—one of the city's largest employment sectors—the City is investing in the sustainability and diversity of its workforce. To support this effort, the Department actively participated in career fairs, promoted internship opportunities, and continued its Park Ambassador Program to engage potential applicants.





### Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3

# PARK AMBASSADORS

In collaboration with the San Diego Parks Foundation, the Park Ambassadors Program aims to empower young adults aged 16 to 24 from low-income neighborhoods in San Diego. By providing mentorship, leadership training, and hands-on experience, the program seeks to cultivate a new generation of civic-minded individuals dedicated to environmental stewardship and public service. Participants are equipped with the skills and knowledge to pursue careers in natural resources management, public service, and community engagement.

## Key Components

- **Mentorship and Leadership Development:**

Participants engage with community and civic leaders through speaking engagements and workshops focused on environmental stewardship, natural resource management, and workforce development skills such as resume writing and public speaking.

- **Community Service and Volunteerism:**

Ambassadors are encouraged to participate in at least four community service projects, fostering a sense of civic responsibility and the value of public service.

- **Civic Engagement:** Opportunities to attend City Council meetings and other civic events allow participants to gain insight into local governance and community decision-making processes.

- **Career Pathways:** The program offers job placement support, with successful ambassadors having the opportunity to join the Department in entry-level positions or participate in the City's mentorship program.

The Park Ambassadors Program has successfully bridged the gap between underserved communities and career opportunities in public service. By investing in youth development and community engagement, the program contributes to the creation of safer, healthier, and more resilient parks and neighborhoods. In 2024, a total of 48 young adults successfully completed the program.



## Class of 2024



## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3

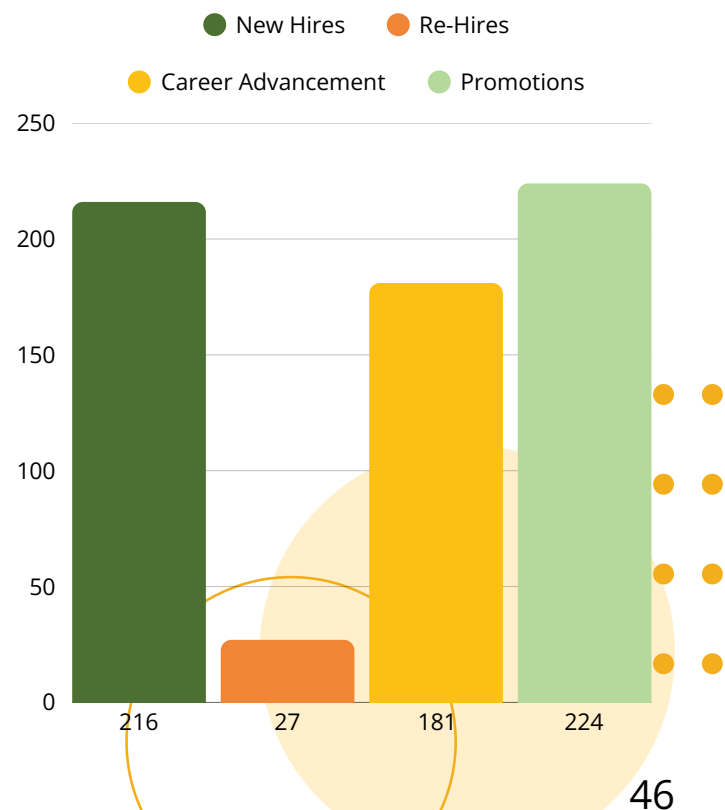
# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Department has made significant strides in recruitment and retention, with a focus on attracting new talent, promoting career advancement, and offering internship opportunities, while ensuring equity and inclusion in the process.

The department has successfully recruited **216** new employees and welcomed back **27** re-hires, demonstrating strong engagement in both attracting new talent and re-engaging former staff. Ensuring diversity and equitable hiring practices remains a priority, fostering a workforce that reflects the community it serves.

These figures highlight the department's emphasis on internal growth, with **405** instances of career progression. A focus on equitable access to career advancement opportunities ensures that all employees, regardless of background, have an equal chance to grow within the department.

Although the Department's vacancy rate was at 21% at the end of 2024, the Department is continuing on-going efforts to attract and retain talent, with significant focus on career advancement and internships. By continuing to emphasize equity and inclusion in recruitment, retention, and career development, the Department can further ensure that its workforce is diverse, representative, and equipped to serve all members of the San Diego community.





**Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3**

# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CONTINUED

## New Hires

- Pool Guard I: 88
- Recreation Leader II: 5
- Golf Operations Assistant: 7
- Asst. Golf Course Superintendent: 2
- Grounds Maintenance Worker II: 21
- Grounds Maintenance Worker I: 38
- Info Systems Analyst II: 1
- Recreation Aide: 29
- Park Ranger: 7
- Golf Course Greenskeeper: 3
- Recreation Leader I: 15
- Custodian I: 3
- Therapeutic Recreation Leader: 3
- Aging Recreation Specialist: 1
- Pesticide Applicator: 3
- Equipment Technician II: 1
- Clerical Assistant I: 2
- Swimming Pool Manager I: 1
- Water Safety Instructor: 3
- Electrician: 1
- Equipment Operator I: 2



## Re-Hires

- Water Safety Instructor: 1
- Recreation Aide: 9
- Associate Engineer-Civil: 1
- Equipment Operator I: 1
- Grounds Maintenance Worker II: 7
- Pool Guard I: 6
- Aging Recreation Specialist: 1
- Recreation Leader I: 4
- Grounds Maintenance Supervisor: 1
- Asst Golf Course Superintendent: 1
- Park Ranger: 1
- Recreation Center Director II: 1
- Golf Operations Assistant: 1





Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3

# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CONTINUED

## Career Advancements

- Grounds Maintenance Worker II: 47
- Public Information Clerk: 3
- Nursery Gardener: 2
- Park Ranger: 6
- Associate Management Analyst: 1
- Administrative Aide II: 1
- Assistant Management Analyst: 1
- Pool Guard II: 47
- Recreation Leader I: 41
- Payroll Specialist II: 2
- Golf Course Greenskeeper: 1
- Custodian II: 2
- Geographic Information Systems Analyst: 1



## Promotions

- Equipment Technician I: 2
- District Manager: 4
- Grounds Maintenance Supervisor: 4
- Supervising Park Ranger: 7
- Grounds Maintenance Manager: 6
- Deputy Director: 4
- Senior Park Ranger: 8
- Equipment Operator II: 6
- Equipment Operator I: 10
- Grounds Maintenance Worker III: 28
- Payroll Supervisor: 2
- Area Manager: 2
- Irrigation Specialist: 4
- Recreation Specialist (Dance): 2
- Assistant Deputy Director: 2
- Environmental Biologist III: 1
- Senior Management Analyst: 3
- Recreation Center Director III: 7
- Program Manager: 1
- Aquatics Technician II: 1
- Swimming Pool Manager III: 7
- Recreation Leader II: 3
- Supervising Management Analyst: 1
- Recreation Center Director II: 6
- Utility Supervisor (Park Utility): 3
- Aging Recreation Specialist: 3
- Administrative Aide I: 1
- Light Equipment Operator: 6
- Recreation Specialist: 1
- Tree Trimmer: 1
- Golf Operations Supervisor: 2
- Golf Operations Assistant: 1
- Pesticide Applicator: 2
- Safety & Training Manager: 1
- Geographic Information Systems Analyst: 1
- Water Safety Instructor: 2
- Therapeutic Recreation Leader: 2
- Horticulturist: 1
- Pesticide Supervisor: 1
- Management Intern: 2





**Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3**

# RETENTION AND RECRUITMENTS CONTINUED

## AQUATICS: FIRST HIRING HALL

The first Aquatics Hiring Hall took place on April 12, 2025 at Allied Gardens Pool. Participants completed skill tests, interviews, reviewed hiring information, and received conditional offers for on-the-spot hiring. Additional support provided by the Personnel Department included City ID pictures, coordinating fingerprinting and medical exams.

Portable hiring halls serve as mobile recruitment centers that bring job opportunities directly into the heart of communities, offering a flexible and accessible solution for prospective candidates. By eliminating common barriers such as transportation challenges, lack of internet access, or unfamiliarity with centralized application processes, these mobile units make it significantly easier for individuals—especially those from underserved or hard-to-reach areas—to learn about available positions, complete applications, and participate in on-the-spot interviews. This ease of access not only increases the number and diversity of applicants but also helps fill critical vacancies more efficiently, ensuring that staffing needs are met promptly to support essential services and programs, such as those tied to the Parks Master Plan.





### Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT TRAININGS

The Department recognizes that quality public service starts with investing in its people. Through a range of career development opportunities, staff build skills to succeed in their current roles and grow into future leadership positions. These efforts also support talent retention, job satisfaction, and the creation of a dynamic, future-ready workforce. Below are examples of trainings that reflect this commitment to professional growth and advancement.

#### Intern Supervisor Training

- Prepares staff to effectively supervise interns by covering recruitment, onboarding, and mentorship best practices. Includes guidance on using Better Impact and offers tools for aligning intern projects with departmental goals while supporting a positive learning experience.

| Total Unique Trainings | Total Training Hours |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 395                    | 19,306               |

#### City Interview Skills

- This session prepares City employees for internal interviews by covering common questions, behavioral techniques, and strategies to showcase qualifications effectively. It's designed to build confidence and improve performance in promotional opportunities.

#### Financial Transaction Training

- Covers procedures and best practices for processing City-related financial transactions, including reimbursements, and record-keeping. Designed to ensure accuracy, transparency, and compliance with City financial policies.

#### Defensive Driving

- Teaches techniques for safe, proactive driving in City vehicles, with a focus on hazard recognition, accident avoidance, and adherence to City driving standards. Required for staff who operate vehicles as part of their duties.

#### CPR Training

- Provides instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), including hands-on practice for emergency response. Equips staff with life-saving skills and is required for roles involving public interaction and recreational programming.



### Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3

# HEART OF SERVICE AWARD

The City's Heart of Service Award honors Department employees who demonstrate exceptional dedication and service to the community. This new recognition program encourages public nominations to acknowledge individuals who have made meaningful contributions through outstanding performance, customer service, safety initiatives, or professionalism. To be eligible, nominees must have been employed by the department for at least three months, maintained good standing without disciplinary actions in the past year, and consistently meet performance standards.

Award recipients receive a certificate, annual leave, and a gift card or department merchandise. The program aims to celebrate the impact of Parks and Recreation staff across the City's extensive network of recreation centers, parks, pools, beaches, bays, open space, and golf courses. The program aims to celebrate the contributions of over 1,100 employees working across 60 recreation centers, 15 swimming pools, three golf courses, and over 42,000 acres of parkland, serving hundreds of thousands of San Diegans each year.

*"Help us celebrate the outstanding contributions of our dedicated Parks and Recreation Department employees by nominating them to the Heart of Service award. This special recognition is awarded to individuals who have made a meaningful impact in our community, going above and beyond to deliver exceptional service."*

*Louis Merlin, Deputy Director*





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 3

# VENDOR RECRUITMENT

As the Department expands its recreation programs and community events, the need for contract service providers grows. To meet this demand, a new Pre-Qualified Vendor Application and Guidelines was launched in 2023, improving vendor access and supporting increased programming.

The Department held **13 Vendor Recruitment Fairs** across the city, strategically located to reach multiple districts. These fairs used the updated guidelines and a fillable application to simplify onboarding. Outreach included flyers, banners, emails, QR codes, social media, local event announcements, and direct business contact. At each fair, staff helped vendors with applications, collected documents, answered questions, and provided translation in English, Spanish, and other requested languages. The fairs assisted 30 vendors, contributing to the successful onboarding of **72 new vendors in 2024**. To expand resources, the Department also partnered with the Library Department to cross-reference vendor lists, enhancing access to a broader network and more diverse vendor pool.



### LOCATIONS:

1. Paradise Hills Recreation Center - **CD 4**
2. Memorial Recreation Center - **CD 8**
3. South Bay Recreation Center - **CD 8**
4. Serra Mesa Recreation Center - **CD 7**
5. South Clairemont Recreation Center - **CD 2**
6. Cesar Chavez Recreation Center - **CD 8**
7. Nobel Recreation Center - **CD 6**
8. Bay Terraces Community Center - **CD 4**
9. San Carlos Recreation Center - **CD 7**
10. North Park Recreation Center - **CD 3**
11. Silverwing Recreation Center - **CD 8**
12. Colina Del Sol Recreation Center - **CD 9**
13. Golden Hill Recreation Center - **CD 3**

<https://www.sandiego.gov/departments-document/pre-qualified-vendors-interest-list-guidelines>

# TACTICAL EQUITY PLAN GOAL

4

Cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for Department employees and the public.

## OBJECTIVES

- Strategize environmental scans to City facilities to ensure that they are culturally inclusive and free of insensitive or racist materials.
- Cultivate a culture of respect in City facilities by following principles of respect, equity, and inclusion.

The Department is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for both employees and the public. This includes conducting strategic environmental scans of facilities to ensure spaces are culturally inclusive and free from insensitive or racist materials. Additionally, the organization aims to cultivate a culture of respect by upholding the core principles of respect, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of its operations and interactions.



## ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Race and Equity Trainings
- Translation Services
- Marketing/Social Media
- City Policies

## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 4

# RACE & EQUITY TRAININGS

The Department has taken active steps to build a more inclusive and equitable workplace by offering internal trainings focused on race and equity. In 2024, over **738** employees participated in Race and Equity training. Additionally, in 2025, a total of **71** employees have completed sessions developed and led by the City's Department of Race and Equity. These trainings are part of a citywide effort to integrate equity into public service.

### Race & Equity Academy (Foundations)

A full-day, in-person session that introduces employees to core equity concepts through hands-on activities and cross-departmental discussions.

### Race & Equity Academy (Equity Innovation Lab)

A two-hour virtual workshop where participants explore equity challenges in their own workplaces through case studies and small group discussions.

### Race & Equity Leading to Transform

A leadership-focused series that equips supervisors and managers with the tools to drive equity-based system changes within their teams.

### Designing for Equity: City Processes

A training designed to help staff apply equity principles to City processes and policies.

Through these trainings, the department is building internal capacity to understand and address inequities both within the organization and in the broader community. This ongoing work supports the Department's commitment to advancing equity among staff, as well as in the programs, events, and services provided to the public.

| Class                                         | Total Hours |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Designing for Equity: City Processes          | 58          |
| Race & Equity Academy (Equity Innovation Lab) | 44          |
| Race & Equity Academy (Foundations)           | 480         |
| Race & Equity Academy (Foundations) Part A    | 8           |
| Race & Equity Academy (Foundations) Part B    | 4           |
| Race & Equity Leading to Transform            | 144         |
| TOTAL HOURS                                   | 738         |





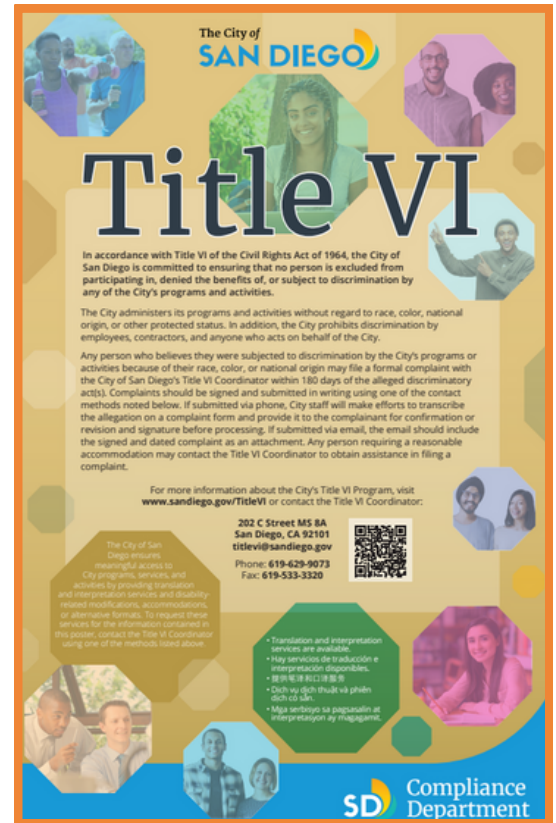


## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 4

# TITLE VI TRAINING

The City is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or subject to discrimination by any of the City's programs and activities. The City administers its programs and activities without regard to race, color, national origin, or other protected status. In addition, the City prohibits discrimination by its employees or by recipients of federal funds from the City, such as other agencies, contractors, consultants, suppliers, vendors, or any other recipient of federal funds from the City. To date, **1,207** employees have completed the Title VI training.

Moreover, the City ensures meaningful access to City programs, services, and activities by providing translation and interpretation services and disability-related modifications, accommodations, or alternative formats. For more information or to request services, email [titlevi@saniego.gov](mailto:titlevi@saniego.gov) or visit the City's website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/compliance/titlevi>



Title VI requires that ***“No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”*** [42 U.S.C. §2000d]



## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 4

# TRANSLATION SERVICES



In 2023, the Communications Department acquired a contract for Citywide Translation Services as identified in Recommendation #13 of the Performance Audit of Equity in Recreation Programming. These services include translation of over **75** languages for documents, over the phone instant translations and live interpreters at in-person and virtual events.

Since then, the Department has used these translation services regularly to translate program guides, event flyers, banners, documents, posters and social media posts into various languages that are identified in each community.

With support from a consultant, the Department will develop a comprehensive language access plan that identifies the primary languages spoken within each recreation service area. The plan will establish clear thresholds for which languages must be accommodated in each area and will include detailed policies and procedures to guide staff in meeting translation service standards. This effort aims to ensure equitable access to services for all community members, regardless of language barriers.



## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 4

# MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA

In an effort to ensure that all San Diegans are aware of the programs and activities held at Department facilities citywide, attention has been placed on building the Department's social media presence. This has included increasing engagement, building the follower count, collaborating with other social media users, streamlining site-specific social media accounts, and providing more opportunities to share about diverse programming in the City.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Department's main social media account, **@sdparksandrec** on Instagram, grew by over 10,000 followers, hitting 20,000 followers in February 2025. Prior to this milestone, the account had sat at a follower count below 10,000 for many years, but the explosive growth was due to staff's proactive efforts to create more engaging content.

The account continues to grow, and this is an important step in ensuring that more San Diegans have access to information about the programs and activities offered by the Department.

20K  
Followers

February 21, 2025

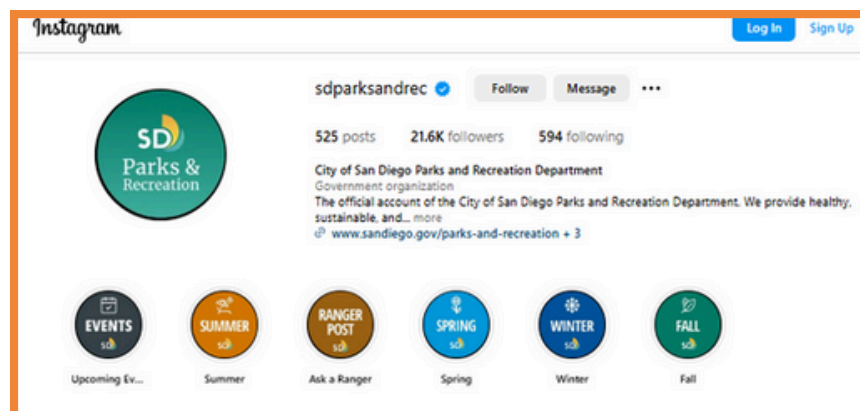


@sdparksandrec



December 12, 2023

10K  
Followers





## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 4

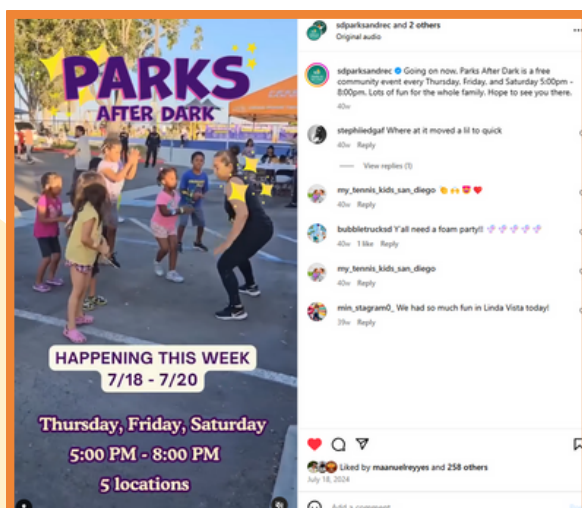
# MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA



The Department added a "What's Happening This Week" Reel feature, which is posted weekly to the account highlighting a variety of events and activities available to the public. Posts have also promoted registration for winter, spring, summer and fall classes and activities, along with other posts sharing about the variety of activities available.



Several individual recreation centers maintain their own Instagram or social media accounts. To support this, the Department developed policies in alignment with the Communications Department to ensure these site-specific accounts are regularly updated and deliver accurate, targeted information to their local communities. By tagging the Department's main social media account in their posts and stories, these local accounts make it easier for the Department to amplify relevant, localized content to a broader audience of potential participants.



Social media is a very powerful tool that can be used to quickly disseminate information about programs and activities to reach a wide variety of users. The Department continues to work to increase its social media presence to ensure that all San Diegans have the opportunity to learn about the many programs and activities available to them.

# TACTICAL EQUITY PLAN GOAL

5

Implement Climate Action Plan goals including fossil fuel use reduction, natural resource management, preservation, restoration, and tree planting.

## OBJECTIVES

- Reduce fossil fuel usage in buildings by electrification, appliance swaps, and use of new emerging technologies in accordance with Climate Action Plan objectives.
- Expand natural resource management plans to identify sensitive habitats, establish resource needs and proper management techniques, and restore and protect valuable open space areas.
- Build the urban shade canopy by planting trees in parks and replacing dead/dying trees.

The Department is dedicated to advancing its Climate Action Plan by reducing fossil fuel use through building electrification, appliance upgrades, and the adoption of emerging technologies. It also emphasizes sustainable natural resource management by identifying sensitive habitats, determining resource needs, and implementing effective restoration and protection strategies for open spaces. Additionally, the organization aims to enhance the urban shade canopy by planting new trees in parks and replacing dead or dying ones, supporting both environmental health and climate resilience. As funding and resources become available Department is slowly make strides forward to achieve this goal.

## ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Tree Planting Program
- Community Gardens





# PARK FORESTRY

In Fiscal Year 2025, Park Forestry, in collaboration with strategic partners, has remained steadfast in its commitment to advancing the City's Climate Action Plan goals and ensuring equitable access to safe, well-maintained parks.

To date, with support from the San Diego Parks Foundation, **56** trees equipped with dedicated irrigation systems have been planted in parks across the city, with additional installations planned. In coordination with the Transportation Department's Urban Forestry Program, Park Forestry is also preparing to plant hundreds of trees in Communities of Concern through the Trees for Communities and Ready Set Grow programs.

This year, the City's official Arbor Day event was held at Colina del Sol Park, where over **200** volunteers contributed to the planting of more than **60** trees, enhancing both the park and the surrounding neighborhood.

Throughout 2025, Park Forestry has continued to demonstrate its dedication to public service by trimming more than **1,735** trees and responding to **68** emergency calls across the park system. These ongoing efforts exemplify Park Forestry's commitment to sustainability, community engagement, and the strategic implementation of the City Strategic Plan to foster inclusivity and parks for all.







## Tactical Equity Plan - Goal 5

# COMMUNITY GARDENS

### Linda Vista Community Garden

The Linda Vista Community Garden, located at 7064 Levant Street in San Diego, is a vibrant urban agriculture space that opened on June 8, 2024. Spanning approximately one-third of an acre within Linda Vista Park, it stands as the one of few community gardens developed within a City Park. This initiative was spearheaded by the Bayside Community Center, a local nonprofit, in collaboration with the San Diego Parks Foundation and other community partners. The project was made possible through a public-private partnership that raised nearly \$500,000 in funding.

The garden features 22 raised garden beds, a greenhouse, picnic areas, shade structures, an outdoor classroom, and established gardens of fruit trees and pollinator plants. It serves as a hub for community engagement, offering residents opportunities to grow fresh produce, participate in educational workshops, and foster connections within the neighborhood.



### Park de la Cruz Program Garden

The Park de la Cruz Community Garden in City Heights community transformed an overgrown vacant lot into a vibrant, accessible green space. Officially opened on September 16, 2023, the garden was developed with support from donors, community volunteers, and local artists. Designed to provide programs for older adults and individuals with disabilities, it features accessible garden beds, benches, shade coverings, and a community mural. In 2024, the garden supported educational programs like cooking classes, produce exchanges, and nutrition workshops, fostering community engagement and wellness. It aligns with the Parks Master Plan and the Age Friendly San Diego Action Plan, reflecting the City's commitment to inclusive and sustainable urban development.





# CONCLUSION

While the Department continues to celebrate successes, there are still many challenges ahead to eliminate inequities and expand meaningful program offerings across the City's diverse communities. Those efforts include:



- Offering competitive wages for recreation and maintenance positions
- Expanding mentorship, internship, and career development opportunities
- Implementing the recommendations of the City Strategic Plan, Parks Master Plan, and Recreation Equity Audit
- Reducing barriers to recreation programs by broadening the availability of the fee waiver process for all programs
- Identifying, understanding and implementing the recreation programmatic needs of each community
- Seeking partnerships and funding sources to improve program offerings and reduce costs to participants, especially within communities of concern
- Continuing to cultivate relationships with the San Diego Parks Foundation, Price Philanthropies, and other nonprofits to bring additional resources for recreation programming
- Expanding the qualified vendors list of program service providers to meet the needs of the communities
- Training and developing staff to manage recreation contracts and integrating them into the program schedule for all recreation centers

Other areas of focus include maintenance practices, deferred maintenance, major repairs, capital improvements, additional park acreage, activation of parks, and opportunities for grants and donations. The Department looks forward to partnering with the City Council, community groups, park stakeholders, and all San Diegans to improve recreation offerings and to bring the Heart of Service to all communities.