



**Parks and Recreation Department**

Administrative Services Division

January 12, 2026

Mr. Jeff Johnson  
Chair  
Mission Bay Park Improvement Fund Oversight Committee  
202 C Street, MS #39  
San Diego, CA 92101  
Via Email: [jeff.johnson@aeoncomputing.com](mailto:jeff.johnson@aeoncomputing.com)

**Subject:** Response to November 4, 2025, Letter from the Mission Bay Park Improvement Fund Oversight Committee Regarding Project Prioritization and Reservation of Funds for Higher Priority Projects

Dear Chair Johnson and Members of the Mission Bay Park Improvement Fund Oversight Committee:

In a letter addressed to Mayor Gloria dated November 4, 2025 (“the Letter”), the Mission Bay Park Improvement Fund (“MPBIF”) Oversight Committee (“Oversight Committee”) had questions about the process used by the City of San Diego (“City”) to select improvement projects within Mission Bay Park to be funded by the MBPIF. The process referenced above pertains to the project priority order listed in [City Charter Article V, Section 55.2](#), Mission Bay Park and Regional Park Improvement Funds (“Section 55.2”).

The Parks and Recreation Department (“Department”) has evaluated both questions raised in the Letter that are related to compliance with Section 55.2 and the City’s funding practices. This includes whether the project list in Section 55.2 (c)(1)(A-E) represents a strict priority order to follow when determining what projects should be implemented or whether it is an overall portfolio of project types eligible for funding using MBPIF. This evaluation also considers whether the City is consistent with Charter requirements now that the planning phase of DeAnza and preliminary engineering phase of the PEIR are ending. Please see both questions and the Department’s response below.

**1. Given that City Charter Section 55.2 (c)(1)(A-E) prioritizes environmental projects over deferred maintenance projects, can the City present the Oversight Committee with projects that improve water quality and expand wetlands?**

**Response:** Priority projects for environmental initiatives include dredging, which was completed in the late 2010s; water quality and wetlands; shoreline treatments; upland habitats; and deferred maintenance.

Before the City can present the Oversight Committee with environmental projects for consideration, both the DeAnza Natural Plan and the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (“PEIR”) must be completed. The milestones associated with these two initiatives dictate the timing for getting environmental projects underway.

The De Anza Natural Plan is an amendment to the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and is focused on natural habitat restoration, wetland creation, climate resilience, and enhanced recreation opportunities such as camping, boating, and trails. This effort was funded by the City General Fund, with the expectation that MBPIF would initiate projects after its completion. De Anza Natural plans for:

- Over 140 acres of new wetlands will provide new habitat, improve water quality, and further the City’s climate action and resilience goals.

- New low-cost visitor accommodations, providing access to affordable overnight coastal accommodations, camping, boating, and nature across 48.5 acres.
- Improved community-serving recreational opportunities that maintain active recreation acreage that serves over 200,000 users per year and offers community-based recreational facilities for a growing population.

The Plan received unanimous approval by the City Council in May 2024 and is now with the California Coastal Commission (“CCC”) for their review and certification, which must occur before implementation can occur. It is anticipated that the CCC will complete its review of the De Anza Natural Plan in 2026. Based on this timeline, projects to implement the De Anza Natural Plan can begin in Fiscal Year 2027. The first project would be a general development plan that would build upon the master plan update, including technical studies necessary as part of initial design work. More information on De Anza Natural can be found at: <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/work/park-planning/de-anza>.

The Mission Bay Park Improvements Program and Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) covers a variety of environmental and infrastructure projects outside of the De Anza Natural Plan area. This includes wetland creation, water quality improvements, shoreline treatments, upland habitats, signage and wayfinding, landscape improvements, and related items. This effort was funded by the MBPIF, and it is anticipated that the MBPIF will continue to fund the future implementation of the projects. The Committee received presentations on the progress of the PEIR on August 5, 2025, and January 6, 2026.

In addition, the final PEIR is anticipated to go to the City Council later in Fiscal Year 2026. The program contains a consolidated list of projects at the 30% design or preliminary engineering level. Each project will be submitted to the CCC on an individual basis. Based on this timeline, projects included in the PEIR can begin the full design process in Fiscal Year 2027, subject to funding availability. More information on the PEIR can be found at: <https://www.sandiego.gov/cip/project-info/project-profiles/mission-bay-peir>

The Department looks forward to discussing which projects are best suited to initiate, as the PEIR projects are in multiple locations in Mission Bay and likely should be phased into design and construction so that multiple large-scale construction projects are not undertaken simultaneously.

In addition to the De Anza Natural Plan and PEIR, the Parks and Recreation Department plans to bring the MBPIF Five-Year Outlook (“Outlook”) to the Oversight Committee in the first half of 2026. This document will contemplate bringing multiple PEIR and De Anza projects into design in Fiscal Year 2027, including the Tecolote Creek Wetlands/Fiesta Island Causeway project referenced in the Letter. The Outlook will also show what projects remain in the queue for construction, as well as any impacts resulting from decisions to abandon any current CIP deferred maintenance projects.

Notably, the Outlook will include funding for a new Mission Beach/Belmont Park Lifeguard Station and Restrooms. As you may know, the current lifeguard station is significantly dilapidated and requires a complete replacement. The anticipated funding need for this project is expected to be substantial, approximately up to \$30 million. This investment is crucial for enhancing public safety response and ensuring the facility is returned to beneficial public use as swiftly as possible.

**2. Is it possible to allocate annual lease revenues on a basis more closely aligned with the City Charter’s project type priorities, and if a priority project is not shovel-ready, reserve or sequester the funds for use when a higher priority project is ready to start?**

**Response:** Although the City Charter does not prohibit simultaneous allocations of funds to multiple priorities, the City's cash management guidelines suggest using funding when it is received for projects rather than allowing funds to accumulate in reserves, particularly when it is known that environmental projects will require extended implementation timelines due to extensive permitting, environmental review, and design requirements. It is anticipated that funding for environmental projects will be funded using a phase-by-phase approach, and when critical construction funding is needed, the Department will match available MBPIF to needs. Other options that could be considered for funding construction include grants, nonprofit partnerships, and bonds.

MBPIF allocations can reside within specific projects, the Mission Bay Park Improvements Annual Allocation (where funds have not yet been allocated to specific sub-projects), or in the fund balance. Specific budgetary requests can shift funds between projects, allocate new funds into projects as part of developing the upcoming fiscal year budget, or transfer leftover funds from completed projects into active projects. These types of allocation requests will continue to be clearly requested and identified for Oversight Committee consideration.

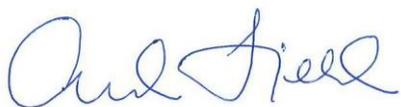
The MBPIF can be used towards deferred maintenance, but the decision to reserve or sequester funds while other assets in Mission Bay are deteriorating and pose a risk to public safety and/or are not usable to the public should be weighed against existing and competing needs. An example of this is the Mission Beach/Belmont Park Lifeguard Station and Restroom project referenced above.

The Outlook is currently under development and will be presented to the Oversight Committee in the first half of 2026.

### **Conclusion**

We hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [afield@sandiego.gov](mailto:afield@sandiego.gov) or (619) 235-1110. Thank you for the time, effort, and expertise you all have invested in the Oversight Committee. The City is deeply appreciative of the Oversight Committee's continued work and advocacy for the betterment of Mission Bay.

Sincerely,



Andy Field  
Director, Parks and Recreation Department

AF/kgd

cc: Honorable Mayor Todd Gloria  
Honorable Council President Joe LaCava and Councilmembers  
Paola Avila, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor  
Nick Serrano, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor  
Rolando Charvel, Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Mayor  
Rania Amen, Chief Community Services Officer and City Engineer, Office of the Mayor  
Emily Piatanesi, Policy Advisor, Office of the Mayor  
Randy Reyes, Community Representative, Office of the Mayor

Chida Warren, Director of Appointments/Boards and Commissions, Office of the Mayor  
Ben Battaglia, Director of Finance and City Comptroller, Department of Finance  
Elif Cetin, Director, Engineering and Capital Projects Department  
Heidi Vonblum, Director, City Planning Department  
Karen Dennison, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department  
Jyothi Pantulu, Assistant Director, Department of Finance  
Tom Tomlinson, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department  
Patrick Hadley, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department  
Carrie Purcell, Deputy Director, Engineering and Capital Projects Department  
Kelley Stanco, Deputy Director, City Planning Department  
Michelle Abella-Shon, Assistant Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department  
Ryan Barbrick, Program Manager, Parks and Recreation Department  
Nancy Graham, Program Manager, Engineering and Capital Projects Department  
Kristen Forburger, Program Manager, Engineering and Capital Projects  
Michael Pelayo, Financial Operations Manager, Department of Finance  
Vicky Joes, Chief of Staff, Council District 1  
Venus Molina, Chief of Staff, Council District 2