

City of San Diego
Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 15, 2026

“TO PROVIDE HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, AND ENRICHING ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL”

Meeting Held by In Person and Teleconference: This meeting was held at the Balboa Park Club Ballroom and remotely using the Zoom Webinar platform and was streamed online. The public was invited to join the meeting by phone or computer, as well as invited to submit Public Comments in writing via a webform. The form was made available on the Parks and Recreation website at <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/general-info/boards>.

Both verbal and written communication were used by Board Members, City staff, and presenters during the meeting. City staff also used the screen-share function to allow viewers to view content shared by the speaker which included PowerPoint presentations and websites.

Before the meeting was called to order, City staff read instructions to the public regarding technical procedures for making live public comment during the webinar.

Members Present	Members Absent	City Staff Present
Jeremy Bloom Marcella Bothwell (Chair) Dr. Andrea Dooley Rick Gulley (Vice Chair) Daniele Laman Evelyn Smith Allison Soares Agatha Wein	Nick Anastasopoulos Dr. Judith Muñoz	Michelle Abella-Shon (Virtual) Ryan Barbrick Kathleen Brand (Virtual) Benny Cartwright (Virtual) Brice Ciabatti (Virtual) Ilisa Goldman (Virtual) Stephanie Green (Virtual) Ana Grow (Virtual) Karen Dennison (Virtual) Jose Mendoza (Virtual) Louis Merlin Justin Nguyen Kaitlyn Porter (Virtual) Elvi Ricafort Zina Rummani (Virtual) Gabriela Verendia

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order by Chair Bothwell at 2:05 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 20, 2025

MOTION/SECONDED:

Ms. Laman/Ms. Smith

A motion was made by Ms. Laman to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Smith. The motion was approved 8-0-0 with the following vote: Yea: Jeremy Bloom, Marcella Bothwell, Andrea Dooley, Rick Gulley, Daniele Laman, Evelyn Smith, Allison Soares,

January 15, 2026

Parks and Recreation Board Minutes – **DRAFT**

Page 2

and Agatha Wein. Recused: None. Abstained: None. Not Present: Nick Anastasopoulos, and Judith Munoz.

Public Comments:

No public comments on the meeting minutes.

Board Comments: None.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT:

Gary Blume from Total Altruism Project (TAP) presented the TAP end-of-year report (Attachments # 1 & 2). He would like to work with Mesa college students to do work at either the Kearny Mesa Recreation Center or Murray Ridge Park. Speaking to Area Manager Ira Patron for Right of entry (REO) access or other mechanisms. Chair Bothwell recommended contacting Deputy Director Steve Palle.

Keri Minnick, resident of Allied Gardens spoke in favor of Joint Use (JU) facility at Foster Elementary School. This proposed JU facility is the only available viable path forward to get additional green space for the community and the school.

Hallie Johnson, resident of Allied Gardens, spoke in favor of the JU facility at Foster Elementary School. She noted that certain concerns about the proposed JU field for Foster can be addressed and acknowledged genuine issues with the project. She maintains that restricting children's access to green fields is not a solution and insists that children should remain central to decisions regarding the proposed project.

Libby Day resident of Allied Gardens spoke that they do not oppose the JU project. She mentioned that they want to meet with P&R staff, Transportation, and the mayor's office to discuss their traffic and safety concerns, aiming to reach an agreement and possibly move forward with the proposed project.

Valerie Mattas expressed views similar to those of Allied Gardens residents who support the JU facility at Foster Elementary School. She is confident that this investment will strengthen the community and provide lasting benefits to students for years ahead. She acknowledged the traffic concerns but emphasized that the benefits outweigh these issues. She expressed her anticipation of a collaborative partnership and affirmed her support for both the school and the community.

Jackie Ho parent at Foster and resident of Allied Gardens spoke in favor of the JU facility at Foster Elementary school. She shared that she was former elementary educator and supported the teachers as instructor and coordinator. This JU field supports Foster. Most concerns of the other residents not in favor are traffic.

Kevin Sullivan asked questions whether Council Policy 700-34 and 700-36 have been updated? Deputy Director Merlin said staff would respond to Mr. Sullivan's questions.

Ozzie Meneses, representing Groundwork San Diego and serving as the director of community projects, expressed gratitude to the San Diego Parks Foundation for their shared experiences with similar procedural roadblocks. These challenges holding back shovel ready projects that are aligned with the Parks Master Plan aimed at creating more green spaces. He

expressed support for the construction of a new fire station, provided that it does not compromise public green space. He supported making the proposed General Development Plan (PDP) for Berardini General Development Plan (GDP) and we strongly urged the community to move forward with the project. He believes that access is limited by a single special interest group and should be accessible to everyone in the community, not just a select group. We are in a time to be given access to healthy public spaces, barriers, and recreation areas.

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCE: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Balboa Park Committee – Ms. Soares reported that they had meeting on the Balboa Park parking. She thanked Deputy Director Richards and his team for the parking updates. She and the committee look forward to the rolling out of distributing parking passes to volunteers.
- Mission Bay Park Committee – Dr. Muñoz was not present, and there was no update.
- Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) – Mr. Gulley provided an update on the East County Advanced Water Purification Project and noted a request to initiate a River Crossing as a capital improvement project within the city.
- San Diego Parks Foundation (SDPF) – Chair Bothwell reported Kim Mathis is the new Vice President of Programming. She deserves it 100%. Chair Bothwell reported the SDPF had winter events, 7,212 a Citywide Flag football and volleyball thirty-eight teams, twenty teams. Children are currently outside and engaged in play activities. Chair Bothwell spoke of upcoming events in Fanuel Playground, Encanto and Memorial Pickleball. She also highlighted the achievements of the winter sport leagues, the competitive events featuring robotic drones, and noted an upcoming charity golf tournament. (Attachment # 3)

CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS:

Chair Bothwell had no additional report beyond the SDPF update.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Ms. Laman expressed thanks to Deputy Director Richards and team for their work on the Balboa Park cottages. It has been a year since the damage occurred to the cottages. She inquired about the closure of the Colina community pool. She also inquired about the possibility of renaming of the recreation center. Ms. Laman suggested that Muni Gymnasium place signage on the front door indicating its temporary closure and provide directions to either Balboa Park Activity Center or Morley Field. She mentioned the cleanup at Ward Canyon and the beautification of Park De La Cruz in Council District 9.

Ms. Wein asked to get an update at the next meeting for the following projects:

1. Boston Avenue Linear Park. Program Manager Barbrick responded that we are collaborating on a grant with the San Diego Parks Foundation. He also stated that the Engineering & Capital Project Department will secure a design consultant in the next few months. Ms. Wein inquired whether securing grant funding means the project is fully funded. Program Manager Barbrick responded yes. Chair Bothwell asked about the project's total funding. Program Manager Barbrick said he knows the grant funding is \$3.8 million; once secured, the project will be fully funded.
2. Hollywood Park in City Heights
3. Barrio Logan pool updates, program changes, and expanded programming? Deputy Director Merlin responded that he would direct Ms. Wein's other questions to the P&R staff.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Parks and Recreation Director Andy Field is absent, so Deputy Director Louis Merlin offered the following update on a variety of park-related topics.

State of the City: Today is Mayor Gloria's State of the City, beginning at 3:00 p.m. and partially overlapping today's Board meeting. As such, Director Field could not attend today's Board meeting so he could attend the State of the City this afternoon.

Balboa Park Paid Parking: Balboa Park Paid Parking began on January 5, 2026. Media reports have expressed concern with reduced attendance at museums and cultural institutions. Today marks 10 days since implementation. Having walked through the park multiple times since implementation, Director Field noted that while people are still coming to the park, there are empty spaces as intended by moving park employee parking to outlying lots. January is among the slower timeframes for visitation at the park, which contributes to the observations reported in the media. Staff will continue to monitor the situation.

Community Recreation Needs Assessment: The Department is hosting its final two virtual focus groups on January 21, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. and February 11, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome to register and attend. Staff is working to get feedback from as many people as possible. Survey submittals are still open through the end of February 28, 2026.

Keen Independent, the consultant involved in this effort, has received over 6,000 survey submittals so far and would like to get as many as possible. The survey flyer has more information including the QR code and website link to participate. The goal is to reach 10,000 submittals by the end of February. For more information including registration information, please visit Keen Independent's website at

<https://www.keenindependent.com/studies/sdparksneeds>.

Help Shape the Future of Recreation Programming!

We want to hear from you!

Are you a leader or representative of a local community organization in San Diego? Do you have ideas for recreation programs or ways to improve public information? Are there barriers preventing community members from participating in programs?

Join a Virtual Focus Group to provide us feedback on how recreational services can be improved to better meet your needs.

UPCOMING VIRTUAL FOCUS GROUPS

07 NOV.	Council Districts 3, 6, and 7 Time: 11:30 a.m.
10 NOV.	Council Districts 4, 8, and 9 Time: 11:00 a.m.
13 NOV.	Council Districts 1, 2, and 5 Time: 11:30 a.m.
20 NOV.	Council Districts 4, 8, and 9 Time: 4:00 p.m.
04 DEC.	Council Districts 3, 6, and 7 Time: 3:30 p.m.
18 DEC.	Council Districts 1, 2, and 5 Time: 4:00 p.m.

For more information, contact Keen Independent Research at sdparksneeds@keenindependent.com

21 JAN.	All Council Districts Time: 11:30 a.m.
11 FEB.	All Council Districts Time: 4:00 p.m.

Virtual meetings will be:

- Held via Zoom
- 45-minute sessions
- Include a presentation, a Question & Answer segment, and interactive survey

Registration required to attend.



Scan to Register
Scan the QR code to register to attend a Focus Group

KEEN
INDEPENDENT
RESEARCH



Parks &
Recreation

SURVEY LINK:
<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8494849/San-Diego-Parks-and-Rec-Community-Focus-Group-Registration>



Your Input is Wanted for the Community Recreation Needs Assessment!

We want to hear from stakeholders, community members, and community-based organizations. The feedback we receive will help shape the programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Scan to Take Survey

Scan the QR code to take the Community Recreation Needs Assessment Survey and provide us your feedback.

Survey deadline Saturday, Feb 28, 2026



Survey Link:
sandiego.gov/parksurvey

Stay Connected

To receive ongoing email notifications from the Parks and Recreation Department scan the QR Code.



Email Sign-Up:
sandiego.gov/pr-signup

For more information, contact Keen Independent Research at sdparksneeds@keenindependent.com or 602-767-7067.



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INDEPENDENT
RESEARCH

SD Parks & Recreation

Emerald Hills Radio Tower Parcel: Chair Bothwell asked Director Field about this parcel offline, so Deputy Director Merlin offered the following update: The private property that hosts the radio towers in Emerald Hills is slated for development. Park staff are not sure what development will arise or how much will become a park. Development Services Department is involved in that effort. There are some who want the entire tract to become a park, but it is not clear if that will be the outcome or not. If a park proposal emerges from the development, it will become a General Development Plan (GDP) amendment at some point in the future.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Chair Bothwell asked about the radio tower. It was zoned as a park, but it is private property. Deputy Director Merlin stated the outcome is still unknown, whether it will be for housing development or park.

Mr. Bloom inquired if anyone is tracking the attendance survey for daily parking at Balboa Park. Deputy Director Richards responded that they do not have the data yet, as it is classified as an open space park. After sorting data from the paid parking kiosks, we can track daily parking. Mr. Bloom mentioned that Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) is monitoring MTS users traveling to the park. Deputy Director Richards replied that he would be able to check the MTS information.

REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE: None

CONSENT ITEMS: None

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

101. 2025 Year-End Reports – Parks and Recreation Board and Regional Park Improvement Fund Oversight Committee

Deputy Director Louis Merlin presented the 2025 Year-End Reports – Parks and Recreation Board and Regional Park Improvement Fund Oversight Committee

Public Comments:

Dave Moty praised the Board for addressing issues with the point system. He looks forward to a meeting to thoroughly address these issues.

Board Comments:

Ms. Laman asked about slides on the standardized report 101. She noted the report should reflect nine meetings, including the July meetings. However, Senior Management Analyst Ricafort reviewed the posted items, and these items were not heard because the July meetings were cancelled. The report is accurate and requires no corrections.

Ms. Bothwell stated that there are structural challenges as shown in the Clairemont, Hillcrest, community plan updates and they are late in the process. She voiced concerns about the community plans, and they were ignored. There is a structural project of the city that constituent does not hear the board properly. This board has asked questions and is not taken seriously.

MOTION/SECONDED: Ms. Laman/Ms. Smith

A motion was made by Ms. Laman and seconded by Ms. Smith. The motion was approved 8-0-0 and passed unanimously with the following vote: Yea: Nick Anastasopoulos, Jeremy Bloom, Marcella Bothwell, Andrea Dooley, Rick Gulley, Daniele Laman, Evelyn Smith, Allison Soares, and Agatha Wein. Nay: None. Recused: None. Abstained: None. Not Present: Mr. Anastasopoulos, and Dr. Judith Muñoz.

102. Proposed Letter in Support for Parkland Acquisition in Talmadge

Board member Danielle Laman introduced David Moty, the past chair of the Talmadge Community Planning Group. Mr. Moty presented the Proposed Letter in Support for Parkland Acquisition in Talmadge.

Public Comments: None.

Board Comments:

Chair Bothwell asked if they have a motion to approve? She thinks the item is the responsibility of the council member and the mayor's office. She clarified the proper motion.

Ms. Soares remarked that the letter does not make sense. The council member or any community representative would initiate the process, which would then be presented to the Board.

Mr. Bloom stated that the recommendation to the Talmadge community group is to send a budget request and to ask for that budget request letter. This is not the right process for this letter.

Ms. Laman said we can use land acquisition using DIF funding. It is to buy one parcel of land but not the other. It is unfamiliar territory how to acquire land and believes that a letter of support goes to the mayor.

Ms. Wein remarked that she acknowledges this approach is not appropriate and emphasized our responsibility to initiate the land acquisition process. Chair Bothwell replied that it would not be appropriate for the board to prompt either the council or the mayor and we do not have money. Ms. Wein stated if we do not have money for, I would encourage the board to advocate for unrealistic.

Chair Bothwell suggested that we follow the process by going first to the Community Group Recreation or go to the community board first before it comes to the Board for voting.

MOTION/SECONDED: Ms. Laman/Ms. Wein

A final motion was made "To send a letter of intent to begin the process of purchasing the land by the Council Members and Mayor's office" by Ms. Laman and seconded by Ms. Wein. The motion failed 3-0-0 with the following vote: Yea: Daniele Laman, Evelyn Smith, and Agatha Wein. Nay: Jeremy Bloom, Marcella Bothwell, Andrea Dooley, Rick Gulley, and Allison Soares. None. Recused: None. Abstained: None. Not Present: Mr. Anastasopoulos, and Dr. Judith Muñoz.

Chair Bothwell suggested that we follow the process by going first to the Community Group Recreation or go to the community board first before it comes to the Board for voting.

January 15, 2026

Parks and Recreation Board Minutes – **DRAFT**

Page 9

103. Proposed Honorary Street Name as Stephen Hill Way in Balboa Park

Deputy Director Jon Richards presented the Proposed Honorary Street Name as Stephen Hill Way in Balboa Park.

Public Comments: None.

Board Comments:

Ms. Soares expressed that Mr. Hill was the humblest man. She was so excited to make a motion for this action.

Ms. Laman also echoed Mr. Hill who was highly active with the projects at the International Cottages.

MOTION/SECONDED: Ms. Soares/Ms. Laman

A motion was made by Ms. Soares and seconded by Ms. Laman. The motion was approved 8-0-0 and passed unanimously with the following vote: Yea: Nick Anastasopoulos, Jeremy Bloom, Marcella Bothwell, Andrea Dooley, Rick Gulley, Daniele Laman, Evelyn Smith, Allison Soares, and Agatha Wein. Nay: None. Recused: None. Abstained: None. Not Present: Mr. Anastasopoulos, and Dr. Judith Muñoz.

INFORMATION ITEMS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

Copies of the reports, attachments, PowerPoint presentations, and audio-video recordings can be found on the Parks and Recreation Department website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/parkandrecboard/reports>.

Next Calendared Meeting: February 19, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Louis Merlin
Deputy Director
Parks and Recreation Department

Attachment(s):

1. TAP end-of-year report
2. Grabber Tallies of all Parks
3. SDPF's VP Presentation

Total Altruistic Project Foundation



Total Altruistic Project Foundation

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San Diego, CA 92115

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www.TotalAltruismProject.org

Federal EIN 85-3296813
CA State EIN C4571895

Overview

The Total Altruism Project (T.A.P.) is a community-based environmental stewardship program that installs free, publicly accessible litter-removal stations in parks. Each station provides litter-grabbing tools and disposal guidance, empowering park visitors to immediately remove litter they encounter.

The program's purpose is twofold:

1. **Environmental Impact** – Reduce litter accumulation in parks and surrounding neighborhoods.

Social Impact – Increase altruistic behavior, civic pride, and shared responsibility for public spaces.

During this reporting period, T.A.P. operated in the following City of San Diego parks:

- Allied Gardens Community Park
- Lake Murray Community Park
- Princess Del Cerro Neighborhood Park

San Carlos Recreation Center

(Additionally, Big Rock Park and Mast Park, both in Santee, serves as a regional comparison site.)

Note: The T.A.P. Foundation has been given permission to install T.A.P. at Murray Ridge Park. We anticipate installation at this park the early part of April 2026.

Community Engagement & Support

T.A.P. continues to demonstrate strong grassroots adoption across multiple parks:

- At all T.A.P. installed parks, community members regularly use T.A.P. tools not only within park boundaries but also along adjacent streets and open spaces.
- At **Lake Murray Community Park** Local Little League programs have reinforced positive behavior by rewarding youth who return from litter cleanups with small concession items.

At neighborhood parks such as **Princess Del Cerro** and **San Carlos Recreation Center**, residents have informally self-regulated and safeguarded the stations, reflecting community ownership.

The visible act of picking up litter has become normalized behavior. Visitors frequently express appreciation for being given the opportunity to contribute rather than remain passive observers.



Support from Grounds Maintenance Workers (GMWs)

Grounds Maintenance Workers (GMWs) have generally expressed appreciation for T.A.P.'s presence in parks where it is installed.

Observed benefits include:

- Reduction in scattered, highly visible litter between scheduled maintenance cycles.
- Increased community awareness of park cleanliness.

Positive interactions between GMWs and park users engaged in stewardship.

T.A.P. is not intended to replace maintenance services, but rather to supplement them by activating volunteer micro-actions throughout the day.

Educational & Behavioral Benefits

T.A.P. functions as an environmental education tool without requiring formal programming:

- Youth learn cause-and-effect relationships between litter and environmental quality.
- Families model pro-social, altruistic behavior in real time.

College-level environmental studies (including formal data collection at Mast Park in Santee) have demonstrated measurable litter reduction associated with T.A.P. presence.

By lowering the “activation energy” required to act, T.A.P. converts intention into behavior. Visitors who might think, “Someone should pick that up,” instead think, “I can pick that up.”

Measurable Tool Retention (Grabber Loss Averages)

Average monthly grabber loss provides insight into both usage volume and community respect for shared resources:

- **Allied Gardens Community Park (5 stations):** 1.83 per month
- **Lake Murray Community Park (10 stations):** 14.08 per month
- **Princess Del Cerro Neighborhood Park (4 stations):** 0 per month
- **San Carlos Recreation Center (5 stations):** 0.917 per month
- **Big Rock Park, Santee (4 stations):** 1 per month

Mast Park, Santee (4 stations): installation date, Nov. 10th 2025. 11/10/2025 = 7 missing; December 2025 = 1 missing; January 2026 = 1 missing.

Interpretation:

- Higher loss at **Lake Murray** correlates with extremely high park usage and heavy tool engagement. This site also demonstrates the strongest observable community participation, and also a higher housing-insecure population.
- **Princess Del Cerro** shows zero loss, reflecting strong neighborhood stewardship and consistent informal monitoring.

Other parks demonstrate low-to-moderate loss, indicating active use while maintaining reasonable retention levels.

Importantly, tool loss is viewed not solely as loss but also as a proxy indicator of engagement volume.



Environmental Impact

Across sites, T.A.P. has contributed to:

- Reduced visible litter accumulation.
- Cleaner high-traffic zones between maintenance cycles.

Positive spillover into adjacent neighborhoods.

Previous academic measurements at comparable sites has documented litter reductions exceeding 50% following T.A.P. installation.

Financial Sustainability

The current annual operating cost to maintain T.A.P. across five parks (with an additional park anticipated) is approximately **\$19,500**, not including labor. Funding has been secured through personal investments, competitive grants and community investment, allowing the program to operate at no cost to the City.

Conclusion

T.A.P. continues to demonstrate that when citizens are given simple, immediate tools to act, they choose to do so. The program strengthens environmental outcomes while cultivating civic pride, youth engagement, and collaborative stewardship between residents and Parks & Recreation staff.

The Total Altruistic Project Foundation remains committed to transparent reporting, partnership with SDP&R leadership, and continuous improvement of the program's impact.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Blume
Founder
Total Altruistic Project Foundation



Attachment #2 – Grabber Tallies of all Parks

[illegible]



San Diego Parks Foundation Program Director Report – Kim Mathis

December 2025

- **Winter Events –**
 1. We enhance 14 events City wide
 2. Total attendance 7,212 for an average of 515 per site

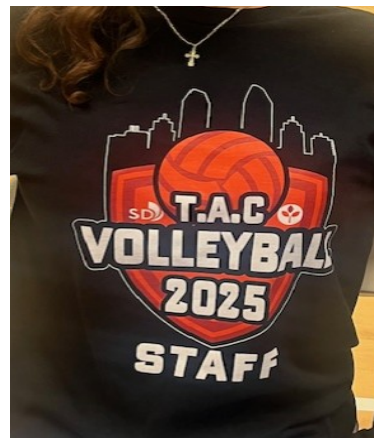


- **Citywide Flag Football Tournament & Cheerleading showcase–**
 1. 50 flag football teams citywide with 28 teams advancing to the tournament. Total attendance at Robb Field on 12/13 was 2600.





- **Winter TAC Volleyball** - Total of 38 teams with 24 advancing to the citywide tournament at Balboa Park Activity Center on Decemner 3rd. Total of 900 in attendance.



- **Winter Classic Basketball Tournament**- Jan. 2 & 3, 2026 @ MLK & Encanto Recreation Centers. 20 teams with 800 in attendance over the 2 days to kick off basketball season in the city.



Projects:

- EB Scripps Sod Project - Ribbon cutting event on December 19th.



Up Coming Projects -

- **Fanuel Park** – Playgroud project coming soon. Waiting for the Deputy Director to share the Right of Entry permit for final review before going back to the City Attorney's Office. We'll need to fully execute this prior to install. Projected start date will be in February.
- **Encanto Skate Plaza Project** – Coming soon. Community council meeting hosted on 1/7/26 to vote. The vote was tabled until the next meeting in February.
- **Southcrest Field Light upgrade** - Late January/early February new LED lights will be installed on the field. Waiting for the turf to dry enough to get the Boom Truck on site.
- **Memorial Senior Center** – phase 1 the demo and installation of a pickelball court over the old shuufle board area. Will start in early February.
- **Willie Henderson Sports Complex** – New outdoor basketball court resurfacing TBA. I will be attending the next Recreation meeting for an action item on Januey 22nd. Once that has happened we will get the project started in collaberation with the City of San Diego and the San Diego football Club.
- Adduitional request we are exploring – Cadman Recreation Center basketball and pickleball court upgrade. Ocean Beach Recreation Center safety fence project.

UP COMING PROGRAMS –

- 1/10/26 Drone Competition @ Southcrest Recreation Center
- 1/22/26 Drone Competition @ Southcrest Recreation Center
- 1/24/26 Martin L. King Jr. Day Festival and Parade @ Martin L. King Recreation Center
- City Wide basketball season kicks starts – January through March
- 8th Annual Undertow Charity Golf Classic @ Torrey Pines on February 6th