

**City of San Diego  
Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, March 19, 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 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.

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>City Staff Present</b>
Jeremy Bloom Nick Anastasopoulos Marcella Bothwell (Chair) Dr. Andrea Dooley Rick Gulley (Vice Chair) Daniele Laman Dr. Judith Muñoz Evelyn Smith Allison Soares Agatha Wein		Michelle Abella-Shon Jonathan Avila Ryan Barbrick Andy Field Ana Grow Tiffany Harrison Daniel Horton Frank Huntlee Jackie Kennedy Maricris Lumibao Jose Mendoza Louis Merlin Sameera Rao Elvi Ricafort Gabriela Verendia Brian Widener

**CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Bothwell at 2:04 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2026**

**MOTION/SECONDED:**

**Vice Chair Gulley/Ms. Laman**

The motion was made by Vice Chair Gulley and seconded by Ms. Laman with an edit in the minutes to include Sheila Bose as a member of City staff who attended the meeting and

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responded to a question. The motion was approved 8-0-1 with the following vote: Yea: Mr. Anastasopoulos, Mr. Bloom, Chair Bothwell, Dr. Dooley, Vice Chair Gulley, Ms. Laman, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Soares. Nay: None. Recused: None. Abstained: Dr. Muñoz. Not Present: Ms. Wein.

**NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT:**

1. Kirsten Skadberg from Groundwork San Diego discussed the Federal Boulevard Dechannelization and pocket park project. A recent milestone was to award a construction project with groundbreaking to occur in April 2026. Ms. Skadberg expressed thanks and gratitude to the Parks and Recreation Department's Asset Management group for their assistance in working to obtain necessary permits.
2. Gary Blume from the Total Altruism Project noted that litter pick up sticks and related equipment will soon be placed in Murray Ridge Park in Serra Mesa. Mr. Blume received an award from the California Parks and Recreation Society District 12 (which covers San Diego County) for his continued work in expanding this program to parks throughout the Navajo and Serra Mesa communities as well as within the City of Santee.

**REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCE:** None.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Balboa Park Committee – Ms. Soares noted quite a bit is happening in Balboa Park as the spring season approaches. She also reminded park patrons to register for parking if they are a resident.
- Mission Bay Park Committee – Dr. Muñoz noted there was no March meeting.
- Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) – Vice Chair Gulley indicated the last meeting was on March 3, 2026. Topics covered included the State Route 52 Operational Improvements project and the Advanced Water Purification project.
- San Diego Parks Foundation (SDPF) – Vice President Kim Mathis presented the 2025 impact report, which is provided in the attachment to the minutes. Topics covered in the report include number of donations received, projects completed, program participants, park ambassador program, spring egg hunts, drone soccer events, and Citywide Basketball Championships.

**CHAIRPERSON COMMENTS:**

Chair Bothwell had no additional report beyond the SDPF update in the previous item.

**BOARD COMMENTS:**

Ms. Laman noted that the House of Czech and Slovak Republics reopened to the public one year after a tree landed on the house and damaged it. She invited people to attend an underwater egg hunt at City Heights Pool, day camp at Colina del Sol Pool, and fishing clinics and archery at Chollas Lake.

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Dr. Muñoz asked about the opportunity for volunteers to undertake repairs and clean-ups in parks. Director Field noted that the volunteer program has expanded substantially, with staff members Mari Carriedo and Kemii Soundara actively hosting park clean up projects.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Parks and Recreation Director Andy Field offered the following update on a variety of park-related topics.

**Budget:** The Mayor's Office continues to develop the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2027, which will be released on or before April 15, 2026. The Department submitted a seven percent reduction scenario as part of the budget development process. Staff will provide the Board with an overview of the proposed budget at the April meeting.

**Mid-City Communities Plan Update:** City Planning Department intended to present an update on the Mid-City Communities Plan at today's meeting. Due to a communication issue that was not the responsibility of the City Planning Department, Parks staff could not get this matter properly onto the agenda within Brown Act requirements. Therefore, this item will be brought to the Board at the April meeting. And Item 201 on today's agenda will be retracted and returned to staff. Director Field apologized to the Board for the noticing error.

**Ms. Laman's Requests:** Last month, Ms. Laman asked for updates on the following topics. Director Field provided short updates on each item:

- Rescheduling turf renovation at the International Cottages immediately after December Nights so that grass area can reopen prior to the Lunar New Year event in 2027. Update: This has been referred to Balboa Park and Permit Center staff to see if this can be accommodated.
- Updating the timeframe of renaming Colina del Sol in honor of Portia Dawson. Update: Staff needs additional information supporting the renaming, including specific achievements that occurred while Ms. Dawson served on the recreation council.
- Adding language into draft Council Policy 700-42 to incorporate a procedure for acquiring new parkland. Update: Deputy Director Sarah Erazo is working to reconstitute a working group to update Council Policy 700-42 to incorporate the policies and procedures associated with Community Recreation Groups. This request can be brought forward to the working group for their consideration.

**Normal Heights Elementary School Joint Use:** Last month, a public comment was received about this joint use being closed to the public. Staff connected with the San Diego Unified School District to help fix this issue. Staff turnover at the District resulted in the gates not being unlocked in the afternoon. This has been addressed, and the gates should now be open during joint use hours.

**Kimbrough Elementary School Joint Use:** Last month, Mr. Bloom noticed that this joint use was being closed to the public. Staff have determined that this was because of the school district's After School 6 to 6 Program. Staff will work with the campus staff to see how public access can be restored alongside the After School 6 to 6 Program.

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**Cesar Chavez:** Considering the troubling allegations raised about Cesar Chavez, the City removed signage at Cesar Chavez Community Center in San Ysidro, which is now known as the San Ysidro Larsen Field Community Center. This included removals of the monument sign, wayfinding signs on the roadway, signage on the building itself, the Lobos team logo, team uniforms, and all other locations that contain the name. The gym floor currently contains his name and will be updated to remove the name as well. Two joint use sites have Cesar Chavez in their names: Cesar Chavez Elementary Joint Use and King-Chavez Charter School Joint Use. The San Diego Unified School District is working collaboratively with the City to address naming concerns at both joint use locations.

**San Diego Parks Foundation:** Director Field thanked the San Diego Parks Foundation for its continued role supporting City parks and appreciated the report offered by Ms. Mathis. It is a true partnership.

**CONSENT ITEMS:** None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**101. Encanto Community Park General Development Plan (GDP) Amendment – Skate Plaza Proposal**

Landscape Designer Frank Huntlee presented the proposal to add a skate plaza at Encanto Community Park through a proposed amendment to the park's GDP.

**Public Comments:**

Zach Doughty spoke in support of the Encanto skate plaza, as this can be an inclusive safe space for the community to enjoy and connect with others.

Sally Smull supports the Encanto skate plaza and noted no negativity in the community recreation group meeting against this proposal.

Abel Macias, member of Encanto Community Recreation Group and professor of Chicano Studies at San Diego State University, is excited about this proposal. This can really benefit the community.

Michel Anderson, past board chair of the San Diego Parks Foundation, indicated the strong support of the SDPF and noted ongoing fundraising efforts to build the new skate plaza. Many skaters came to all of the meetings and is very appreciative of the support of numerous stakeholders to bring this forward.

**Board Comments:**

Ms. Smith thanked Council District 4 staff, especially Jackie Kennedy, for helping to bring the skate plaza proposal to the community. She is appreciative of the proposal and moved approval of the staff recommendation to repurpose the shuffleboard courts into a new skate plaza.

Ms. Laman asked what the recreation value points are for Encanto Community Park. Skate plazas bring seven points. Mr. Huntlee will provide the full park's recreation value points once it is calculated.

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Dr. Muñoz asked if the funding was in place to build the skate plaza facility. Chair Bothwell noted that it is halfway funded, with SDPF fundraising underway.

Director Field thanked Councilmember Henry Foster III from Council District 4 for the vision of the new skate plaza, thanked Council District 4 staff including Jackie Kennedy and Tiffany Harrison for leading the effort to bring this proposal to the community, and the San Diego Parks Foundation for its tireless efforts supporting this skate plaza and working to get the funding needed to build the skate plaza.

**MOTION/SECONDED: Ms. Smith/Ms. Anastasopoulos**

A motion was made by Ms. Smith and seconded by Mr. Anastasopoulos. The motion was approved 10-0-0 and passed unanimously with the following vote: Yea: Mr. Anastasopoulos, Mr. Bloom, Chair Bothwell, Dr. Dooley, Vice Chair Gulley, Ms. Laman, Dr. Muñoz, Ms. Smith, Ms. Soares, and Ms. Wein. Nay: None. Recused: None. Abstained: None. Not Present: None.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

**201. Planning for Parks and Recreational Opportunities**

Director Field requested this item be returned to staff and apologized for the item not appearing on this agenda correctly.

**202. Citywide Parks Development Impact Fees (CPDIF) Project Updates**

Program Manager Ryan Barbrick presented an overview of the Department's capital improvements program, focusing on projects funded by Citywide Park Development Impact Fees.

Public Comments: None.

Board Comments:

Ms. Laman asked about the status of Chollas Triangle Park. Assistant Deputy Director Michelle Abella-Shon responded that the project is currently in the land acquisition phase, which can be funded by the land acquisition portion of the Citywide Park Development Impact Fees.

Mr. Bloom asked about matching funds to align with development impact fee allocations and whether nonprofit organizations such as San Diego Parks Foundation can help leverage funds. Mr. Barbrick responded that leveraging private funding occurs, and a good recent example is Casa Familiar participating in the first phase of development of Beyer Park in San Ysidro.

Mr. Bloom asked about how park deficiency is calculated, by acreage or by recreation value points (RVPs). Ms. Abella-Shon responded that the Climate Equity Index map is based on a variety of factors to identify communities of concern. City Planning is reviewing all parks to identify recreation value points in accordance with the Parks Master Plan. Chair Bothwell clarified the question is about use of recreation value points to determine park deficiency. Mr. Avila noted that the Citywide Park Needs Index is currently under development. The resultant map from this Index will eventually replace the park acreage basis that has been in use.

Ms. Laman asked about how equity and communities of concern are incorporated into project selection and prioritization, especially when some communities have limited or no

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parks. Ms. Abella-Shon and Director Field provided a brief overview of Council Policy 800-14, which outlines the various factors that are considered, including equity, project readiness, safety, and funding plan.

### **203. San Diego’s Urban Forestry Program**

Urban Forester Brian Widener from the Transportation Department provided an overview of the City’s urban forest and programs established to maintain the forest and increase tree canopy on City property, including parkland and public rights of way.

#### Public Comments:

Anne Fege, former chair of Community Forest Advisory Board, noted the importance of park trees and shade. She noted resources are available at <https://katestrees.org/>. Trees enrich and engage because they offer cooling, beauty, social places, wildlife habitat, ecological services, and more. She thanked Park Arborist Erich Kast for his continued commitment to trees.

Abel Macias, member of Encanto Community Recreation Group and professor of Chicano Studies at San Diego State University, asked whether native species would be included in the management of the urban forest.

#### Board Comments:

Ms. Laman recalled older community plans that called for planting palm trees. She noted that guidance has changed over the years. A key consideration is fire safety, as evidenced by the Montezuma Fire on October 31, 2024. This fire charred privately-owned open space on the hillside north of Talmadge and south of Alvarado Estates along Montezuma Road.

Ms. Soares thanked staff for the presentation and asked what Board members can do to help get information about the City’s Urban Forestry Program to the public. Mr. Widener responded that he is using the City webpage to promote the content and emphasizes safety.

Dr. Muñoz asked if staff monitor trees in private parking lots. Mr. Widener indicated the Development Services Department handles that inspection role, and an enforcement mechanism is not in place.

Mr. Bloom asked about the U.S. Forest Service grant including status of number of trees that remain to be planted under that grant. Mr. Widener stated that the upcoming Arbor Day event at Gompers Park on April 24, 2026, will be one of the final planting events using these grant funds. He noted that trees stay watered for three years after they are planted.

Chair Bothwell noted an ongoing confrontation between street tree advocates and business owners. Occasionally, trees are trimmed to cut for view to allow visibility to business signs and storefronts. Chair Bothwell noted a specific example along Garnet Avenue in Pacific Beach.

In response to the public comment from Mr. Macias, Mr. Widener and Director Field provided an overview of native trees in San Diego, noting that there are difficulties fitting certain trees into urban spaces and that most trees need watering in order to survive in San Diego’s semi-arid climate. Irrigation is particularly important for trees to survive in parks. Director Field thanked Mr. Widener and the Transportation Department for their partnership in planting more trees across the City including the parks.

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**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

Copies of the reports, attachments, PowerPoint presentations, and audio-video recordings can be found on the Parks and Recreation Department website at

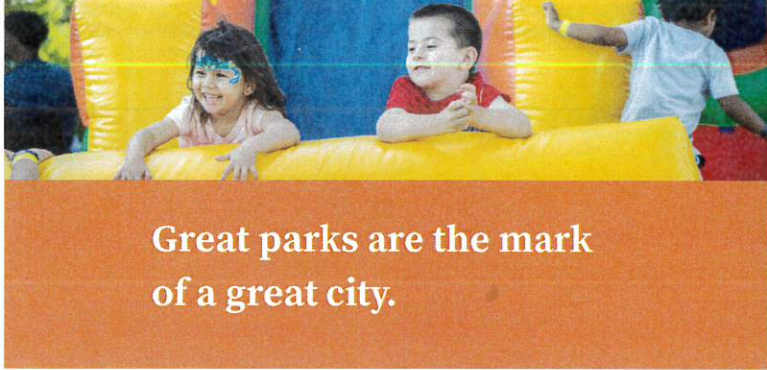
<http://www.sandiego.gov/parkandrecboard/reports>.

**Next Calendared Meeting: April 16, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.**

Submitted by,

Andy Field  
Director  
Parks and Recreation Department

**ATTACHMENT:** San Diego Parks Foundation 2025 Impact Report



Great parks are the mark of a great city.

# 2025 Impact Report



 **\$1.6M**

In total donations received

 **7**

Capital projects completed successfully

 **75,049**

Individuals participated in our programming

**Come Play Outside**

-  **352** Children ages 6-12 attended 16 weeklong low-cost Nature Camps
-  **4,189** Individuals attended 16 Movies in the Park
-  **4,209** Teens attended Friday night Teen Nites at 10 recreation centers
-  **14,244** Citywide sports athletes across 8 leagues

COME PLAY OUTSIDE PRESENTS:  
**PARKS  
★AFTER DARK★**

**36,098**

Individuals attended 99 Parks After Dark summer events across 5 parks with free food & family fun

**Parks Ambassadors**

**50** Park Ambassadors participated across two annual sessions

**64%**

Of 131 Park Ambassadors who have gone through our program, 64% are employed by the City of San Diego

**Deep Sea Fishing Trip**

 **50** Children attended our Deep Sea Fishing Trip

**Drone Competition**

 **675** Participated in Drone Competitions across the city

**Seasonal Events**

- 3,462** Attended Spring Egg Hunts
- 4,283** Attended Halloween Events
- 7,212** Attended Winter Events

## 2025 Impact

The San Diego Parks Foundation's mission is to invest in and actively advocate for community and neighborhood parks, recreational activities and outdoor resources in the City of San Diego, promoting the public interest by ensuring these spaces are attractive, welcoming, safe, equitable and accessible to all residents.

In 2025, with the partnership of residents, volunteers, and supporters, we expanded access to welcoming public spaces, strengthened care for our natural areas, and delivered more opportunities for people to gather in recreation spaces. The figures you've seen — **240 events supported, 85,000 individuals served, \$1.6 million invested** — show the scale of this effort.

Yet impact is also measured in everyday moments: a family attending their first park program, a young person discovering nature, a neighbor feeling pride in a space that reflects their community. When parks thrive, communities thrive, and together we are building a future where everyone can enjoy safe, vibrant public spaces for generations to come.



### Parks After Dark

Parks After Dark is a wonderful example of what a collaborative effort can provide to a community. From June 14 through August 9, five recreation centers opened their doors every Thursday through Saturday, reaching more than 36,000 participants across the season. By hosting these events, we created a safe, welcoming, and interactive space for families at no cost.

#### Highlights:

- Up to **250 children** received a nutritious meal each night
- Over **20,000 meals** and desserts total were provided to youth and adults
- **4,423 families** took home fresh produce and commodities (through our partnership with Feeding San Diego)
- **500 backpacks** loaded with back-to-school supplies were distributed to youth ages 8 to 14 with the support of JP Morgan Chase
- **1,400 swimmers** at open swim nights at Memorial and City Heights
- **52 community groups** handed out information about free services to attendees

Continued investment ensures we can meet growing demand and keep these evenings free, safe, and full of possibility.

### Nature Camp

Nature Camp opened the outdoors to young people who might not otherwise have access to summer enrichment. During the summer, week-long camps operated at 16 recreation centers, welcoming 352 campers into safe, active environments filled with discovery, friendship, and hands-on learning.

#### Highlights:

- Two field trips per camp and a visit from the Humane Society
- Daily STEAM exploration, sports, crafts, and healthy lunches
- 86% of parents agreed that camp was a positive experience for their child and 89% reported they would sign their child up again
- Parents requested additional camp days, science experiments and animal encounters

Ongoing support allows us to keep these life-changing experiences accessible and affordable for every family who wants to participate.



## Movies in the Park & Teen Nite

Movies in the Park brought families together for free, joy-filled evenings with popcorn, ice cream, and jumpers throughout the summer and fall. Across 16 locations, 4,189 neighbors joined us — an average of 262 people per site.

Teen Nite is offered at 10 recreation centers every Friday night for 6 weeks in the summer. It provides a safe and engaging environment for teens to socialize and play games together. 4,209 teens participated in these weekly events to keep them active in positive activities at their local recreation centers.

Support from our partners and donors is imperative to keep offering this program to our communities of need.



## Citywide Sports & Drone Competitions

Citywide sports is the cornerstone of recreational activities and one of the largest programs we sponsor. 14,244 athletes played in sports leagues this year, from ages 5 to 17. Our philosophy is that everyone gets to play, no matter their income or experience level.

We aim to ensure that no child should have to sit on the sidelines because of cost. Your support helps make sure they don't — and every dollar goes directly to keeping kids in the game:

- \$30 outfits a child in a uniform, giving them a sense of pride and belonging on competition day
- \$1,200 funds a full season of officiating for one division, ensuring fair, organized competition for every participant

Drone Competitions offer a competitive alternative to traditional recreational sports, opening the door for young people who may not connect with conventional athletics. This year, 675 participants ages 8 to 15 took part in citywide competitions. Through hands-on drone piloting, young competitors developed focus, spatial reasoning, and technical confidence in an environment designed for everyone to play.

## Seasonal Events

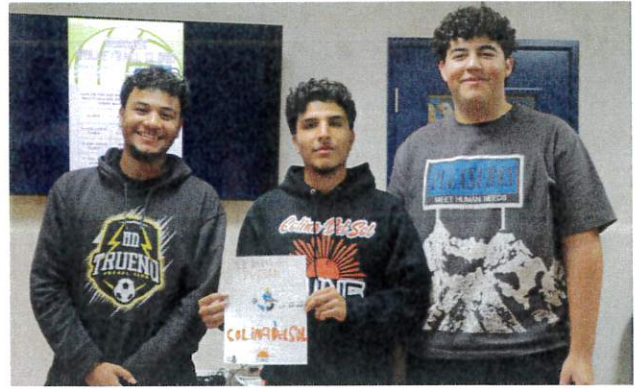
Seasonal events bring the community together to celebrate key cultural moments in parks across the city, offering vibrant celebrations rooted in arts and culture, live entertainment, food, and activities for all ages. These events include our Spring Egg Hunts, Halloween Events, and Winter Events. With support from the San Diego Parks Foundation matching Parks & Recreation funding, each event delivered a well-rounded experience. This year, 14,957 residents came out to celebrate, turning local parks into holiday destinations.



## Park Ambassadors

Park Ambassadors continued to build pathways to employment while empowering residents to care for and represent their neighborhood parks. The new Next Step program, held February 12 through April 23, welcomed 23 participants, with four advancing to interviews for City positions in May — a strong signal that continued training and mentorship can open doors to Park Ambassadors who have not yet been placed in city jobs.

In November, the program celebrated the graduation of its ninth cohort, with 25 ambassadors completing the curriculum. Outcomes extended well beyond the classroom: four moved into City internships, four were placed as Recreation Aides, and 11 are slated to become interns with Community Parks II. Our Park Ambassadors thrive professionally — from prior cohorts, two were promoted to Assistant Center Directors at our local recreation centers. With continued support from donors and partners, Park Ambassadors is growing a local workforce, strengthening stewardship, and ensuring parks are powered by leaders who reflect the communities they serve.



## Community Events - Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Day & I Love My Park Day

Two of our signature citywide gatherings — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and I Love My Park Day — welcomed a combined 3,700 attendees across our largest park spaces, filling them with live entertainment, activities, and information on community resources. Every recreation center was invited to participate at both events, ensuring that each one was able to share information about their activities, sports, and camps with families across the city. At these events, families come together to either honor the legacy of a civil rights icon or to celebrate the green spaces that make our communities stronger. All our programming is designed to connect residents to resources, recreation spaces, and the people around them.

Ongoing support allows us to continue bringing the full breadth of our community together: one celebration, one park, and one shared memory at a time.

## Deep Sea Fishing Trips

For many participants, our Deep Sea Fishing Trip is their first time seeing the Pacific Ocean — let alone stepping onto a boat. In 2025, we hosted one trip, bringing 50 San Diegans out on the water for a day of hands-on learning and adventure. A Park Ranger on each trip guides participants through the ecology of the California coastline and the marine life of the Pacific, while everyone learns to bait a hook, cast a line, and practice boat and water safety. The group always gets a meal, and every participant goes home with their catch, a commemorative shirt, and an award.

One trip of 50 participants costs \$6,500. Ongoing support allows us to bring this experience to more 10 to 17 year olds, especially those who have never had the chance to explore the ocean in their own backyard.



## Capital Projects

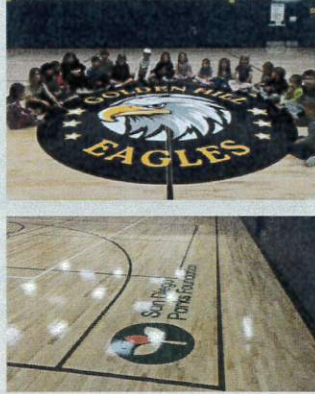
2025 was the first year that the Parks Foundation tackled multiple infrastructure projects within a calendar year. We completed **8 projects totaling over \$473,000** invested in capital improvements in our communities and neighborhoods. Without the support of our generous donors, none of these projects would be possible. We look forward to enhancing more parks in 2026.

Golden Hill gym floor - completed April 2025

*BEFORE*



*AFTER*



Rancho Bernardo sod restoration - completed June 2025

*BEFORE*



*AFTER*



Southcrest outdoor court resurfacing - completed October 2025

*BEFORE*



*AFTER*



Cesar Chavez basketball standards replacement - completed June 2025

*BEFORE*



*AFTER*



Montgomery Waller baseball fields - completed June 2025

*AFTER*



EB Scripps turf project - compiled October 2025

*BEFORE*



*AFTER*



Colina outdoor court renovation  
- completed October 2025

BEFORE



AFTER



La Jolla tree lightning - completed December 2025

BEFORE



AFTER



MAJOR SUPPORTERS



PREBYS  
FOUNDATION

The Hervey  
Family Fund



The City of  
**SAN  
DIEGO**



LLSC



Albatross Foundation -  
Brent Woods

Ann Parode Dynes

Gerardo Jaimes-Garcia

Juan Carlos Hernandez

Beth Murray

Zachary Nelson