



**CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER TONI ATKINS**

**Looking at the future of Balboa Park**

A couple of weeks ago, I joined Mayor Jerry Sanders in front of Balboa Park's iconic Botanical Building to receive a report commissioned by three of San Diego's venerable foundations with philanthropic roots in the park. The report, *The Soul of San Diego – Keeping Balboa Park Magnificent in its Second Century*- provides a snapshot of the park's current conditions and opens a discussion on the future governance of Balboa Park (click here for a copy of the report). The Mayor and I then tasked the Balboa Park Committee, the appointed volunteer committee that reviews land-use matters in the park, to engage the public in a discussion of the report and to provide a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council on the future stewardship of Balboa Park.

Although the topic of the best type of governance for Balboa Park has been bantered about for years, I am grateful that the coalition of three foundations – the Legler Benbough Foundation, San Diego Foundation and Parker Foundation, for commissioning a study that has brought this discussion to the forefront of San Diego's agenda.

Please join the Balboa Park Committee and authors of the study at a kick-off workshop scheduled for **Saturday, March 8, 2008, 8:30am-noon at the Balboa Park Recital Hall** (west of Park Boulevard and Presidents Way). At this meeting, the consultants that conducted the studies will present their findings and data sets and answer questions. The Balboa Park Committee will also present a schedule of meetings over the next few months that include public participation. The Balboa Park Committee has committed themselves to an open and transparent discussion of all the facts. These meetings promise to be vigorous and I invite all San Diegans to participate.

Everyone, including me, has many questions about how different governance models highlighted in the report may (or may not) work for Balboa Park. We must first assess the current conditions of the park then engage stakeholders in a thorough public and open dialogue. I believe our approach to any proposed change needs to be vetted cautiously and thoughtfully, looking at all the pros and cons of each model carefully and how it may impact the many unique aspects of this public facility. Each of the park's myriad of stakeholders should take this opportunity to offer their insight.

I continue to be impressed by the comments I've received since the release of the report and how so many of us have a sense of ownership for this priceless public resource. It is quite evident we care greatly for Balboa Park and want the best for it.

I look forward to your sharing input and thoughts over the next few months at upcoming Balboa Park Committee meetings. If you have questions regarding the public process, please contact Jeffery Tom in my office at 619.236.6633.

I am confident that with your involvement in this upcoming public discussion, the health and viability of the crown jewel of our park system will be protected for future generations.

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