



REPORT

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO TO THE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

DATE ISSUED: June 9, 2014

REPORT NO. 202

ATTENTION: Park and Recreation Board
Agenda of June 19, 2014

SUBJECT: Park Condition Assessments

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATIONAL ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE BOARD.

Condition assessments can assist the Park and Recreation Department in developing asset replacement schedules and determining the best use of scarce fiscal resources. The Department began limited condition assessments in Fiscal Year 2014 for 30 parks, evaluating such critical assets as playgrounds, parking lots and park roads, athletic fields, and other park infrastructure. To continue these efforts, the Department estimates between \$300,000 and \$500,000 per year over the next four fiscal years will be needed to assess the developed parks within the City's park system. The Fiscal Year 2015 Park and Recreation Department budget includes approximately \$250,000 to continue the assessments. Future allocations will be requested until all developed parks have been assessed. These assessments will assist the Department in developing a long-term capital improvement plan and serve as an important first step necessary to develop a parks master plan.

BACKGROUND

The City of San Diego has over 41,000 acres of developed and open space parkland that offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of San Diego. The park facilities provided within these 41,000 acres play an important role in the physical, social, and environmental health of the City and its residents. Park facilities improve the quality of life of San Diego residents by strengthening the body and maintaining physical well-being. Parks also provide visual relief and individual and team recreational opportunities. The environmental benefits of parks include habitat for native plants and animals, storm water management, and can reduce the effect of urban heat islands. Finally, parkland within the City of San Diego is an economic engine that supports the tourism industry and enhances the City's ability to attract and retain businesses.

The City's park system stretches from Rancho Bernardo Community Park and adjacent open space in the north to Coral Gate Neighborhood Park in the south, which is located approximately ½ mile from the border with Mexico. It extends from the beaches along the Pacific Ocean to San Carlos Community Park in the east. It is one of the largest park systems in the United States. The park system includes:

- 26,422 acres of open space lands
- 8,675 acres of developed parkland
- 252 acres of planned future developed parkland managed by the Park and Recreation Department
- 5,977 acre La Jolla Underwater Park, our lowest maintenance facility.
- 110 acre Mount Hope Cemetery

Within the developed parkland, the current parks have approximately:

- 29 acres of playgrounds in 215 locations. Of these playgrounds, approximately 65% are 15 years old or older
- 220 acres of asphalt paving. This equals a typical city street 40.5 miles long.
- 210 outdoor basketball courts
- 153 tennis courts
- 66 athletic fields with field lighting
- 89 Little League fields
- 204 softball fields
- 193 multi-purpose athletic fields
- 38 sand volleyball courts
- 162 comfort stations
- 23 concession stands

The number of other typical park amenities such as picnic tables, drinking fountains, picnic shelters, benches, barbecues, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks has not been estimated. The Department also has not inventoried special park features such as boat docks in Mission Bay Park or decorative fountains in Balboa Park.

Due to the park system's size and variety, a full conditions assessment of park infrastructure will be a long-term endeavor which will involve Park and Recreation Department (Department) staff along with staff from other City departments and professional assessment consultants.

The Department's primary level of service is provided by dedicated, conscientious, trained employees complemented by over 200,500 annual hours of community volunteers (Calendar Year 2013). While staff and volunteers maintain facilities and run recreational programs on a daily basis, it is the capital investment to develop and upgrade the necessary park infrastructure which enables the Department to obtain its vision of providing quality parks and programs. Identifying new park facility needs is rather straightforward and often listed in Community Plans and Community Public Facility Financing Plans. However, knowing the condition of existing

park facilities and identifying where best to place capital improvement funds is a much more difficult task.

Addressing the slow decline of park infrastructure is often deferred until the decline reaches a point where drastic action is required, such as the removal of all play equipment from a playground due to unacceptable conditions. Only through continuous condition assessments of park infrastructure, strategic capital planning, and funding can the Department continue to provide the facilities necessary for the City to offer quality parks and programs.

Currently, staff is implementing an inventory and condition assessment model that is consistent with the ten-step Enterprise Asset Management model described in Council Policy 800-16, adopted by the City Council on November 20, 2013, Resolution R-308574.

DISCUSSION:

Current Park Inventory Status

The Department maintains an inventory spreadsheet of park properties throughout the City primarily based on information obtained from the Real Estate Assets Department (READ) as each property was acquired. Data collected for each park site included the name, classification, acreage, and address of the park. Each park also has a General Development Plan (GDP) which acts as the master plan for the park and identifies the main park features proposed to be located within the park. The GDP's along with the park inventory was the extent of the Department's central asset data.

In addition to this centralized information contained in the READ inventory and the GDP master file, operational staff members maintained their own files for each park site. As a result, staff knew the detail of the parks to which they were assigned, but that information did not exist in a central, easy-to-access location. When the Department began to implement asset management via Geographical Information System (GIS) software, the data from the park inventory spreadsheet migrated to a GIS software system. However, the GIS data didn't begin to grow until the Department became involved with a program initiated by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in 2012 to provide more park specific information for a nationwide web based data and mapping system called PRORAGIS. The system allowed member agencies to share important information about their park systems' assets, budgets, and operations and maintenance information. It was not developed for public consumption.

To provide the data necessary for the PRORAGIS program, the Department was required to collect park data and develop a more complete inventory of its assets. With the assistance of park operations staff, a count of the number of park facilities was developed. The Department's Asset Management staff then attempted to verify the information received via aerial photography within the GIS system and through web sites such as Google Earth, which provided more up to date aerial photography and street level photography. Staff then reviewed and updated the older inventory of property information and other data from paper sources was incorporated into the GIS data base. These efforts allowed the Department to convey the size and number of assets within the park system.

While the data collected identified City parks and their assets, none of the data addressed actual asset conditions. The Department now has a framework in which condition assessment priorities can be established.

Initial Condition Assessments

The Public Works Department began a limited building conditions assessment effort in 2007 in which 442 of the City's approximately 1,700 General Fund and Enterprise Fund buildings were assessed, commonly referred to as the Parsons Report. The current phase of building assessments is underway that will update the prior assessments performed and assess all other General Fund and Public Utilities Enterprise Funded buildings. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for this assessment work was presented to the Infrastructure Committee on October 28, 2013.

For the Fiscal Year 2014 budget, the Department was allocated \$263,909 to expand its park asset inventory efforts and begin condition assessments on park infrastructure. Some of this funding was earmarked for a student intern to assist with the data collection and asset inventory. The remainder of the funding will be used to hire a consulting firm to begin the assessments of park assets, including, but not limited to, playgrounds, parking lots and park roads, walkways, play courts, skate parks, lighting systems, trails, storm water facilities, and athletic fields. Of the park assets to be assessed, playgrounds, parking lots and park roads, and athletic fields are of particular interest to the Department.

Playgrounds:

The International Infrastructure Management Manual and the play equipment industry identify the life expectancy of playground equipment to be 15 to 20 years. Many park playgrounds throughout the City have reached or exceeded their life expectancy, as approximately 65% of the park system playgrounds are 15 years old or older. Park staff regularly inspects all Department managed playgrounds to ensure they are safe for the public to use as identified in the California Health and Safety Code, Sections 115725-115735. These standards include safety inspection requirements and playground equipment replacement schedules. The Code specifically states "Playgrounds installed between January 1, 1994 and December 31, 1999, shall conform to the playground-related standards set forth in the American Society for Testing and Materials and the playground-related guidelines set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission not later than 15 years after the date those playgrounds were installed."

Sometimes to ensure safety, older play equipment has to be removed from a playground. Due to the age of the equipment, identical replacement parts to make needed repairs are often unavailable. Notably, playgrounds lack uniformity, as equipment varies from park to park. The Department's Consultant's Guide to Park Design and Development (Guide) list six play equipment manufacturers approved for use in the City's park system. However, other manufacturers whose materials and warranties are similar to those within the Guide are allowed to bid on park playground projects and are often approved for use. The age of the equipment and the variety of manufacturers used makes replacement difficult if not impossible, especially as manufacturers cease to support older playground designs and no longer produce compatible

replacement equipment. While the Department has anecdotal evidence of the conditions of various playground structures throughout the City park system, no comprehensive analysis of playground conditions has been completed.

Unfortunately, the lack of available identical replacement parts leaves the Department with the sole option of complete removal of damaged play equipment. Newer, non-identical equipment cannot be simply installed into these older playgrounds without also addressing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California accessibility requirements. Therefore, as play equipment is removed, these older playgrounds lose their play value and are less attractive to the children who may use them.

Park Roads and Parking Lots:

Similar to City streets in the public rights of way, park system roads and parking lots also fall into disrepair as their long-term maintenance is deferred. Due to competing priorities, the Department's budget typically does not include sufficient funding to address park road and parking lot issues in a timely manner. Not only do these conditions convey a negative perception of a park, it also can damage vehicles and limit access to park facilities. Park roads and parking lots in a state of disrepair are more difficult and time consuming to maintain on a daily basis. Parking lot lines will wear away along with the top surface of the paving which reduces the efficiency of the parking lot when users park in a haphazard manner. Generally, parking lot repairs are easy to accomplish. However, as with playgrounds, ADA access can have a significant impact on the repair costs which may delay the repairs until funding beyond the actual repair is identified. The negative perception, complaints, and barriers to park facility access are the primary reasons why park roads and parking lots were also identified as high priority assets for condition assessment.

Athletic Fields:

Athletic field condition assessments are also a high priority for the Department. While the Department operates a few synthetic turf athletic fields, a majority of them are natural turf that is heavily used by youth and adults for active recreational activities. Each year the Department receives many complaints related to field conditions, often due to heavy use and near-constant play with minimal downtime. Notably, turf maintenance has been made more difficult due to the lack of turf fertilization over the past few years. The general assessment will simply be visual in nature. Some athletic fields will receive an enhanced assessment which will be more agronomical in nature with the repair recommendations being long-term maintenance oriented. The enhanced assessment will evaluate soil types, soil compaction, soil fertility, pests, irrigation system efficiency, and field use patterns.

Condition assessments of athletic fields may result in the Department reviewing and considering changes to its maintenance procedures and service levels. More site specific maintenance procedures may be needed to adequately address the conditions identified during the condition assessments for each park instead of the current city wide approach applied to all athletic fields. This may place athletic field improvements into a different category than most other park assets. The same would be true of other living landscape features considered for assessment. Trees,

turf, and landscape provide a character to parks that nothing else can equal. These living assets evoke the emotional connection many citizens have with their local parks.

Conditions Assessment Contract

The Public Works Department hired three consulting firms to provide condition assessments on City facilities through a competitive process. One firm will concentrate on assessing General Fund maintained buildings, and a second firm will assess buildings and other structures for the Public Utilities Department. The third firm will be involved in assessing park facilities. Through negotiations with each firm, a pricing structure was derived that will be the basis for their fees through Fiscal Year 2018. The consulting firm assigned to work on park assessments provided two methods of determining the cost to complete a park condition assessment.

The first method is a per square foot cost to provide a basic assessment of individual parks. As the park acreage increases, the assessment cost per square foot decreases as described in the following chart. Some mini parks have a minimum cost of \$500.

Assessed Park Area	Square Foot Unit Price
Less than 1 acre	\$0.032
1 to 5 acre	\$0.019
6 to 10 acre	\$0.012
11 to 25 acre	\$0.011
25 to 50 acre	\$0.006
50 to 150 acre	\$0.004
Greater than 150 acre	\$0.002

Minimum fee per park \$500
 1 acre = 43,560 square feet
 3% increase in price each year beginning in FY15

The basic assessment would include playgrounds, parking lots and park roads, walkways, hard courts, general assessment of athletic fields, fencing, etc., and readily achievable ADA accessibility. Readily achievable ADA means they would visually, with minor equipment, assess what ADA implications may apply to any recommended repair or replacement of an asset.

The second approach is to add additional asset assessments to the basic park assessment work. These items include trails, security and athletic lighting systems, aquatic centers, buildings, and a more detailed assessment of athletic fields. These additional assessments costs are:

Athletic Fields	Unit Price
Less than 1 acre	\$5,000
1 to 5 acre	\$7,500
6 to 10 acre	\$10,000
11 to 25 acre	\$15,000

Athletic Fields	Unit Price
25 to 50 acre	\$20,000
Security Light Systems	\$2,500
Athletic Field Light Systems	\$2,500
Aquatic Centers	\$0.24 per SF
Buildings	\$0.24 per SF
Trails	\$90.90 per Mile
Fully Compliant ADA Assessment	\$0.09 per SF

3% increase in price each year beginning in FY15

This method of breaking down the assessment costs provides the Department the ability to prioritize assets to be assessed with the funding available. Not every park needs to have its athletic fields fully assessed, only those not performing as they should. The same may hold true for lighting systems. In addition, conducting assessments on a limited number of these “add on” assets may begin to identify patterns which can be applied city wide, such as noting that security lights mounted directly to a walkway seem to deteriorate more rapidly than those mounted on elevated concrete footings.

The Department identified 30 parks for the consulting firm to perform assessments on during this first conditions assessment effort. These assessments will establish the means, methods and reporting framework for all future park assessments. The 30 parks were chosen because they are representative samples of the typical conditions within the park system, they are geographically distributed to include older and newer parks, concentrate on high use community parks with a range of assets, and include parks with known issues expressed by park users.

Initial Condition Assessments

Council District 1

Carmel Valley Community Park
Doyle Community Park
La Jolla Community Park

Council District 2

Bill Cleator Community Park
South Clairemont Community Park
Ocean Beach Athletic Area (Robb Field)

Council District 3

Mission Hills Neighborhood Park
North Park Community Park
Old Trolley Barn Neighborhood Park
Pantoja Neighborhood Park

Council District 4

Paradise Hills Community Park
Keiller Neighborhood Park
Kennedy Neighborhood Park
Lomita Neighborhood Park

Council District 5

Rancho Bernardo Community Park
Rolling Hills Neighborhood Park
Spring Canyon Neighborhood Park

Council District 6

Canyonside Community Park
Olive Grove Community Park
Mesa Viking Neighborhood Park

Council District 7

Allied Gardens Community Park
Linda Vista Community Park
Villa Monserate Neighborhood Park

Council District 8

Montgomery Waller Community Park
Grant Hill Neighborhood Park
San Ysidro Athletic Area (Larsen Field)
Vista Terrace Neighborhood Park

Council District 9

Colina del Sol Community Park
Southcrest Community Park
Willie Henderson Sports Complex

Total initial assessment cost is estimated to be \$225,040. Adding athletic field assessments to the parks listed above where no detailed athletic field assessment will be performed, approximately \$152,500 of additional funding would be needed.

To initiate condition assessments, the Public Works Department issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a variety of assets, including parks. Through the competitive RFP process, staff selected Kitchell to conduct the park condition assessments. Efforts to evaluate the 30 sites listed above are currently underway, and Department staff discussed this with the Infrastructure Committee at its May meeting. By late May, Kitchell visited and preliminarily assessed these sites, and it intends to have a report to Department staff by mid-summer. Staff intends to have an update on this initial effort to the Infrastructure Committee and Park and Recreation Board in September or October.

Future Condition Assessments

The current park system master plan was prepared by the Department in July 1956. At that time, the City's park system had a total of 5,720 acres of parkland. The Department now manages over 41,000 acres. While the Recreation Element in the General Plan identifies city-wide park requirements and goals, it doesn't identify park needs and approaches to meet those needs at a community level. Condition assessments on all park facilities will be an important first step in developing a park system master plan.

Based on the current consultant fees, the number of parks, and developed acreage within those parks, the Department projects approximately \$300,000 per year over the next four years will be needed to complete basic assessments. Should full assessments of the approximately 500 acres of athletic fields be included, the estimated funding would increase to approximately \$500,000 per year for a total estimated cost of \$2 million. The fee schedule within the consultant contract allows flexibility to meet the Department needs. Therefore, the range in funding needed would be between \$300,000 and \$500,000 per year over the next four (4) fiscal years. The funding estimates include the 3% per year fee increases.

The Mayor's Proposed Fiscal Year 2015 Budget includes funding for continuing the park condition assessments effort in this manner and adds a Park Designer and intern to provide additional asset management for the park system. The City Council will consider finalizing the proposed budget on June 9, 2014.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Department has been allocated \$263,909 in Fiscal Year 2014 as a one-time expenditure for park condition assessments and hiring a Management Intern. Additional funds would be needed to continue this effort in Fiscal Years 2015 through 2018. The proposed Fiscal Year 2015 Park and Recreation Department budget includes \$250,000 to continue the assessments. A consultant has been hired for citywide condition assessments, so continued funding would enable optimal usage of existing procured services rather than seeking a new vendor several years from now.

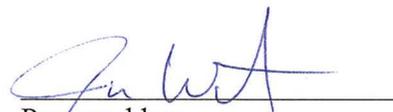
PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

This item was presented to the Infrastructure Committee on May 14, 2014. The Committee accepted the report. The item is not scheduled to be presented to the full City Council.

Respectfully submitted,



Approved by:
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