



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
TO THE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

DATE ISSUED: October 23,2015

REPORT NO. 301

ATTENTION: Park and Recreation Board
Agenda of October 29, 2015

SUBJECT: Park Capital Improvement Program Streamlining

SUMMARY

This report recommends modifications to the community input process for park development projects that assures the public has adequate advance notification and opportunity to participate in the input process of park development projects. The revised process is intended to be administratively efficient and structurally predictable while resulting in timely public input. This matter is a workshop item for discussion by the Park and Recreation Board.

BACKGROUND

Park design and development is often a very intensive process with ample community and public input. Residents care deeply about their regional, community, and neighborhood parks. The City Council adopted Council Policy (CP) 200-14, "Park and Recreation Facility Landscape Design" in 1981 to provide for the planning of parks (see Attachment A). CP 200-14 states, in part, "landscaping for new [park] facilities, and the improvement or redevelopment of existing facilities, be designed in a manner that will assure user safety and facility function, reduce water and energy use, and reduce construction and maintenance costs."

CP 200-14 provides for the preparation and use of a General Development Plan (GDP), which is a conceptual master plan that identifies the activities and amenities to be included within a park, such as landscaping, playgrounds, athletic fields, and other park uses. The GDP is the basis for eventual construction documents; it is created at the time a park is first conceived and amended in the case of significant redevelopment of existing facilities. The Park and Recreation Board and its subcommittees are responsible for recommending approval to the Park and Recreation Director for any new or amended GDP in accordance with San Diego Municipal Code Section 26.31.

The process for public input to park projects, including preparation and revision to GDPs, is provided in CP 600-33, "Community Notification and Input for Citywide Park Development Projects." The City Council adopted this policy in 2003 and last amended it in 2012. Recently, staff has noticed trends about park development: the duration and cost of GDPs have increased significantly; the existing public input process for GDPs is the same regardless of the size of the amendment; and in some cases, a GDP amendment required additional planning level efforts. Staff in all three departments involved in the delivery of park projects-Park and Recreation, Planning, and Public Works-recognized these concerns and began to look at process improvements to reduce unnecessary project costs and delays.

At the Infrastructure Committee meeting of March 11,2015, staff presented a list of proposed capital improvement program (CIP) streamlining measures (see Attachment B). Among these measures is the recommendation to streamline the public input process for park projects as provided in CP 600-33. The focus of this effort was to address the completion of General Development Plans (GDP) for minor park improvements.

As part ofthis larger effort, staff presented the proposal to streamline park CIP delivery to the Park and Recreation Board on May 21,2015. A staff report (see Attachment C) outlined the objectives of streamlining, which include soliciting input for improvement and streamlining and amending CP 600-33 to increase flexibility in the process due to size or complexity of the project, shorten the GDP phase based on type of improvement, and reduce schedule and cost impacts.

In a joint memorandum dated June 22, 2015 (see Attachment D), Council President Pro Tempore Marti Emerald, Councilmember David Alvarez, Councilmember Scott Sherman, and Councilmember Chris Cate requested that staff expand the effort of streamlining CP 600-33 from the original narrow focus of minor park improvements to include a shorter and less expensive approach for obtaining public input and completing park CIP projects, including improvements to the GDP process.

As a result of this memorandum, staff presented an update to the Infrastructure Committee on July 22, 2015 (see Attachment E) that expanded the scope of process improvements to all park projects. To meet this request, staff from all three departments worked together to develop a comprehensive revision to CP 600-33 and create clear guidelines and expectations for park development projects.

DISCUSSION

To meet the request to streamline project delivery, reduce project timeframes, and reduce project costs, staff identified several key focal areas described below. A copy of the proposed CP 600-33 is in Attachment F, a strikeout/underline version of CP 600-33 is in Attachment G, and the current version of CP 600-33 is in Attachment H. A comparative flow chart is in Attachment I. The proposed CP 600-33 makes the following key clarifications and changes:

1. A GDP is defined as a conceptual master plan that identifies the activities and amenities to be included within a park. A GDP is the foundation for project design but is not itself a part of design.
2. Public input does not begin with the preparation of a GDP. Prior planning efforts, such as community plans, public facilities financing plans, impact fee studies, master plans, and

other public processes feed into the GDP approval process and provide earlier opportunities for public input.

3. Park projects are stratified into three broad categories so that less complex, more straightforward projects can proceed on the fastest track possible, while more complex and larger park projects receive appropriate levels of public input.
 - a. The first category of park development project is where a GDP already exists and no changes to the GDP are necessary to implement it. In some cases, insufficient funding was available at the time of GDP creation or amendment to fund certain improvements, so projects that fall into this category would have already received public input. Examples of this level include amenities already identified in the GDP yet unconstructed or new amenities that do not displace existing park uses:
 1. Security lighting
 11. Picnic shade structures
 111. Accessibility improvements
 - 1v. Comfort station improvements and/or expansion
 - v. Improvements related to health and safety
 - b. The second category of park development project is where a GDP amendment is required. This occurs when a new minor park improvement is proposed that is not represented in the existing GDP. Examples of this level include:
 1. New comfort stations
 11. New sports field lighting (where no sports field lighting currently exists)
 - m. Upgraded or expanded tot lots or playgrounds
 - 1v. Parking lot expansion of less than 25% of existing parking lot
 - v. Turf conversion from natural to synthetic or vice-versa
 - c. The third category of park development project is where a new or amended GDP is required in order to implement a major park improvement that may displace other park uses. Examples of this level include:
 1. New tot lot or playground
 11. New park or expansion of an existing park
 - m. New recreation center or expansion of an existing recreation center
 - 1v. New aquatic complex or expansion of an existing aquatic center
 - v. New special activity park (i.e., skate park, dog off-leash, etc.)
 - v1. Parking lot expansion greater than 25% of existing parking lot
 - v11. New joint-use facilities (i.e., multi-purpose sports fields and jogging tracks on school district property)
4. Proposed CP 600-33 specifies a different level of public input for each of the categories of park development projects as follows:
 - a. Recreation Councils:
 1. Park projects in the first category (projects that require no GDP amendment) will have one Recreation Council meeting
 11. Park projects in the second category (minor projects that require a GDP amendment) will have up to two Recreation Council meetings
 - m. Park projects in the third category (major projects that require a GDP amendment or new GDP) will have up to three Recreation Council meetings

- b. Area Committees (Community Parks I and II) consist of at least one representative (typically chairs) from each Recreation Council. Under the proposed CP 600-33 process, Area Committees would no longer participate in the approval process for a new or modified GDP. The Recreation Councils effectively provide local input on park facilities. Area Committee members could attend Park and Recreation Board meetings to offer their advice on upcoming GDPs. Area Committees would continue to serve in their existing capacity for other park issues such as fees, special use permits, and other matters of general interest.
 - c. The Design Review Committee consists of design professionals from throughout the region, including architects, landscape architects, graphic designers, and civil engineers. As a subcommittee of the Park and Recreation Board, its role is to provide a more technical peer review of new and amended GDPs. Under the proposed CP 600-33, this role would be eliminated. Historically this additional step has resulted only in minor changes and tweaks to the overall conceptual plan that was developed by a registered landscape architect under contract with the Public Works Department. It is likely that the Design Review Committee would no longer serve a purpose after removal of the GDP review function, and if the updated CP 600-33 is approved, the Park and Recreation Board may decide to eliminate it.
 5. The Park and Recreation Board reviews and makes a recommendation to the Park and Recreation Director for approval or denial of the general scope of the project. For the Park and Recreation Director to approve a GDP, staff must conduct an environmental review. Approval of the GDP allows the park project to proceed into the detailed design (construction drawings/documents) phase.
 - a. Park projects in the second category (projects that require a GDP amendment for minor improvements) would be reviewed individually by Board members. If a Board member requests to have the item heard it would be placed on a Board agenda. If there is no request, the project is deemed to be recommended for approval.
 - b. Park projects in the third category (projects that require an amendment or a new GDP for major improvements) would be heard by the Park and Recreation Board at a scheduled Board meeting.

Adoption of the above streamlining measures could provide time savings of up to two months for major park projects and up to four months for those projects that require no GDP when compared to the current park development process (see Attachment I). These time savings are accompanied by a reduction in level of effort and associated costs that are best saved for tangible park amenities.

Respectfully submitted,



Herman D. Parker
Park and Recreation Director

Attachments:

- A. Council Policy 200-14, Park and Recreation Facility Landscape Design
- B. Report to the Infrastructure Committee of March 11, 2015
- C. Report to the Park and Recreation Board of May 21, 2015
- D. Joint Memorandum dated June 22, 2015 from Council President Pro Tempore Marti Emerald, Councilmember David Alvarez, Councilmember Scott Sherman, and Councilmember Chris Cate regarding Park CIP Streamlining
- E. Presentation to the Infrastructure Committee of July 22, 2015
- F. Draft Council Policy 600-33, Community Notification and Input for Citywide Park Development Projects (proposed)
- G. Comparison of Draft and Current Council Policy 600-33, Community Notification and Input for Citywide Park Development Projects (strikeout/underline)
- H. Current Council Policy 600-33, Community Notification and Input for Citywide Park Development Projects (existing)
- I. Flow Chart Comparison of Existing and Proposed CP 600-33 Process