

APPENDIX X: Summary for Uptown

Park and Recreation Needs Assessment for the Greater Golden Hill, North Park and Uptown Communities, prepared by BW Research Partnership, August 2011

Six key findings of the survey pertaining to the Uptown Community included the following:

- Individual activities (walking with or without a dog, jogging/ running, and relaxing) were the most frequently reported activities in neighborhood parks and Balboa Park by residents in all three communities;
- Uptown residents placed a high level of overall importance on expanding and improving the trails, paths, and walkways in and around their community (68%) and improving and enhancing existing park and recreation facilities (68%). An overwhelming majority of residents reported walking for exercise as the top use of neighborhood trails and walkways (75%);
- The renovation and improvement of existing neighborhood parks was reported as the highest investment priority for future parks and recreation facilities (49% Uptown);
- More than half of Uptown residents preferred smaller neighborhood parks closer to home (53%) compared to larger community parks with more resources (37%);
- Investing in small parks or trails that connect to existing parks, including Balboa Park (60.8%), and improving school grounds (60.2%) received the highest priority for alternative parks and recreation facilities; and
- An overwhelming majority of residents supported the use of Balboa Park for local parks and recreation (69% Uptown), such as: walking, running, jogging, or exercising, quiet times of reflection, bicycling or skating, children's play areas, picnicking, pick-up ball games and other related informal sports.

The survey evaluated community priorities in both traditional parks and recreation facilities including existing parks and city pools, as well as alternative parks and recreation facilities (a.k.a. park equivalencies) including roof-top parks, school grounds, and trails that provide recreational opportunities, revealing the following four priorities of highest importance:

- **Improving and enhancing existing park and recreational facilities.** Throughout the survey, residents seemed to indicate a preference for improving and developing what is already there rather than creating something new.
- **Expanding and enhancing existing trails, paths, and walkways in and around existing communities.** Given the high usage of parks and trails for walking, running, and exercising, any investment in developing trails, paths, and walkways is likely to show a high return on investment for residents in terms of usage and impact on satisfaction.
- **Improving school grounds so they can be better used by residents for recreational activities.** Overall, residents consistently supported the idea of building upon the resources and facilities that are already in place rather than building or developing completely new infrastructure.

- **Small parks or trails that connect to existing parks including Balboa Park.** This priority is consistent with residents' overall view that Balboa Park should not only be a regional attraction, but also provide local residents park and recreational amenities.

The survey identified the community's top six uses of neighborhood parks and outdoor recreational areas as:

- walking (without a dog)
- running or outdoor exercises
- picnicking, sunbathing, reading, or relaxing outdoors
- walking a dog(s)
- quiet times of reflection
- playgrounds for children

Investing in existing parks and recreational resources was reported as a high priority, most especially in the following nine potential investment areas:

- Renovate and improve existing neighborhood parks to increase use;
- Increase the amount of land for parks;
- Develop new sports fields, such as soccer, football, or baseball;
- Develop new off-leash dog parks;
- Develop areas in parks that accommodate birthday parties or large picnic gatherings;
- Increase the number of city-owned gyms for indoor sports, such as basketball or indoor volleyball;
- Develop new recreational facilities such as a community recreation center;
- Build new skateboard parks;
- Build new swimming pools.

Investment priorities for alternative parks and recreation facilities (park equivalencies) included eight areas of potential investment:

- Improving school grounds so they can be better used by residents for recreational activities;
- Small parks or trails that connect to existing parks including Balboa park;
- Public facilities that have multiple uses including children's play area, as well as multi-purpose fields and courts;
- Parks developed on unused streets that no longer have vehicles on them;
- Plazas and gathering areas;
- Roof-top parks;
- Narrowing wide streets to provide linear parks along the streets;
- Parks in private developments with some public access.

Lastly, the survey revealed that the top locations where the community recreated indoors were at private and non-profit recreation facilities (e.g., YMCA), which is understandable in view of the lack of public, City-operated, facilities within the community to serve their needs.