



**COUNCILMEMBER CHRIS CATE
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
SIXTH DISTRICT**

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: July 24, 2019

TO: Andy Field, Interim Director, Parks and Recreation
David Nisleit, Chief, San Diego Police Department

FROM: Councilmember Chris Cate 

SUBJECT: Blue Light Emergency Phones Pilot Program and Proposed
Amendments to the Consultant's Guide to Park Design & Development

The City of San Diego oversees and manages more than 400 parks, 40 of which are in District Six alone. The City's park system supports and provides opportunities for individual growth, cultural exchange and enrichment, youth development, special needs programming, and senior services. I believe we must continue to encourage our families and friends to visit our City Parks and feel safe and secure while doing so.

On June 21, 2017, Mayor Faulconer announced the development of a new master plan for San Diego's park system for the first time in more than 60 years. The Parks Master Plan will determine the vision for parks, recreation facilities, and programming for the next 20 to 30 years. Included in the Parks Master Plan is an update to the Consultant's Guide to Park Design and Development, and a guideline for use by City staff, design consultants, and the public in the design and development of improvements for City parks. This guide can serve as a vehicle for public safety enhancements at City park facilities.

Much like Neighborhood Watch programs and Designated Online Transaction Spaces (D.O.T.S.), Blue Light Emergency Phones are an additional community policing tool for reducing and deterring crime. The color of Blue Light phones is associated with the police. Calls from any of these phones connect directly to a 911 dispatcher, such that emergency personnel can determine precisely where the call is being made from, unlike calls received from a mobile phone. More and more cities are installing these devices because they have proven to be a valuable part of a comprehensive public safety strategy.

Blue Light Emergency Phones were first installed in 1991 on college campuses in response to federal legislation. Nearly three decades later, Blue Light Emergency Phones can be found throughout District Six at community colleges, San Diego MTS Transit Stations, and hospitals.

Among the many cities who have implemented Blue Light Emergency Phones are: Boston (MA), Santa Ana (CA), Winona (MN), Charleston (IL), Grand Rapids (MI), Auburn (WA), and Rexburg (ID), to note a few. Blue Light Emergency Phones have even been installed recently at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA.

Other agencies with Blue Light Emergency Phones have compared the installation process to that of stop signs, having a similar height of nine to ten feet tall. These emergency phones are connected to a landline. On average, Blue Light Emergency Phones come with a two-year limited warranty. Ongoing maintenance involves an annual check-up of the phone's connectivity by [city] staff, and the replacing of the battery for the solar panels every two to three years.

Public safety is a shared responsibility. As such, I respectfully request the Parks and Recreation Department and San Diego Police Department evaluate the feasibility of this proposal with the long-term goal of having Blue Light Emergency Phones installed at all City of San Diego parks, and that they be included in the City of San Diego's Consultant's Guide to Park Design & Development. I recommend purchasing and installing Blue Light Emergency Phones for three District Six parks (Mira Mesa Community Park, North Clairemont Community Park, and the Canyonside Recreation Center), supported by my office budget, and serving as a pilot for this city-wide program.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

CC:rk

cc: Jessica Lawrence, Director of Council Affairs, Office of the Mayor