



# REPORT

## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO TO THE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

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DATE ISSUED: June 8, 2016

REPORT NO. 101

ATTENTION: Park and Recreation Board  
Agenda of June 16, 2016

SUBJECT: NORTH PARK COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE – RECREATION ELEMENT

### SUMMARY

Issue – Should the Park and Recreation Board recommend approval to adopt the Recreation Element of the draft North Park Community Plan Update?

Director's Recommendation – Recommend approval to adopt the Recreation Element of the draft North Park Community Plan Update.

Other Recommendations – The following groups have reviewed and considered the proposed item:

1. November 11, 2015 – The North Park Planning Committee (NPPC) voted 9-0-0 to conditionally approve the Draft Recreation Element with the following recommendations:
  - a. Recommendation 1: Add Goal 15 – “Rebuild and expand existing facilities.”
  - b. Recommendation 2: Revise Policy RE-1.10 by adding “...with high density, mixed-use as a priority.” to the end of the sentence.
  - c. Recommendation 3: A caveat that the City will accept the NPPC request for a presentation of a General Development Plan (GDP) for a Balboa Park project that uses North Park development impact fees (regarding equivalencies).Recommendations 1 and 2 have been incorporated into the current draft of the Recreation Element. Recommendation 3 – the City will accept the NPPC request for a presentation of a General Development Plan (GDP) for a Balboa Park project that uses North Park development impact fees (regarding equivalencies).
2. May 5, 2016 – The Balboa Park Committee voted 5-3-0 to recommend adoption of the Balboa Park equivalency sites proposed in the draft Recreation Elements of the Golden Hill, North Park, and Uptown Community Plan updates.

Fiscal Impact – Not applicable.

Water and Energy Conservation Status – Not applicable.

Environmental – North Park Community Plan Update: A Program Environmental Impact Report (Project No. 380611/SCH No. 2013121076) has been prepared for the Golden Hill Community Plan Update and the North Park Community Plan Update. (Public review date of May 31, 2016; public review of 60 days).

## **BACKGROUND**

As part of the City's work program to update community plans, the City embarked on concurrent updates to the Golden Hill, North Park, and Uptown community plans. The updates started in 2009, with an intensive public outreach effort centered on individual community meetings that included stakeholder committees, neighborhood associations, workshops on key topics, multi-day charrettes, and meetings with the respective community planning groups. In addition to soliciting public input through various stakeholder meetings, the City commissioned a Park and Recreation Needs Assessment for the Golden Hill, North Park and Uptown Communities (Needs Assessment) in August of 2011. The survey results, which were representative of the demographically-diverse communities' recreational use patterns and opinions, and were contained in a report presented to each community, were used to help guide the draft Recreation Element.

Needs Assessment priorities for park and recreational facilities:

- Balboa Park should not only be a regional attraction, but also provide local residents park and recreation amenities.
- Improvement and expansion of local trails, walkways and trail connections to existing parks and Balboa Park.
- Improvement, renovation and enhancement of existing parks and recreation facilities.

The Balboa Park East Mesa Precise Plan (BPEMPP), adopted in 1993, also provides recommendations for park land adjacent to North Park. These recommendations have been incorporated into the draft Recreation Element, with community support. Key recommendations from the BPEMPP include:

- Redevelopment of Morley Field with typical community park facilities including renovation and expansion of the Bud Kearns Aquatic Complex, a new recreation center, expansion of sports fields and parking areas, and provision of children's play areas, group picnic facilities, and community gathering spaces.
- Redevelopment of the Central Operations Station as the Pershing Recreation Complex, which would provide active recreation facilities including sports fields, access to Inspiration Point, and parking.
- Reestablishment of the Arizona Landfill area as useable park land with active and passive recreation uses.

## **Population-based park land and Equivalencies**

While the City's primary goal is to obtain land for population-based parks, in some communities where vacant land is not available or is cost-prohibitive, the General Plan allows for the use of park equivalencies to be determined by the community and City staff. North Park is an urban community where park equivalencies would be appropriate for satisfying some population-based park needs. The draft Recreation Element recommends a number of park equivalency proposals including sites in Balboa Park located adjacent to the boundary of the North Park community.

Also studied in the update process are the park equivalency categories for joint use of schools, non-traditional park sites, and trails within city-owned open space. McKinley Elementary School will augment four existing joint use facilities. Boundary Street Linear Park, and Howard Avenue and Madison Avenue Pocket Parks are proposed non-traditional park sites created through the conversion of City streets and Caltrans rights-of-ways to park land. Trail equivalencies provide the community with hiking/running trails, interpretive panels, trail kiosks, and scenic overlooks. North Park has two distinct open space canyons that can provide trails and trail amenities. These trails will meet the Needs Assessment priority of expanding and enhancing existing trails in and around existing communities.

The draft Recreation Element includes specific goals and policy recommendations for addressing population-based park and recreation facilities, preservation of these facilities, accessibility to the facilities, and open space lands. Future park and equivalency sites, and the recreation facilities that will best serve North Park, have been identified. These recommendations, along with the goals and policies of the General Plan and the BPEMPP, provide a comprehensive parks strategy intended to serve North Park's recreational needs over the life of the plan.

## DISCUSSION

**Community Profile:** The Greater North Park community is approximately 1,980 acres and is located in the central core of the City of San Diego. Originally settled at the turn of the century, North Park has evolved into a mixed use area with a diversity of residential uses, strong commercial districts and a growing arts community. It is a community with a long-standing history located adjacent to Balboa Park and in close proximity to Golden Hill, City Heights, Normal Heights, and Uptown.

**General Plan Standards:** The projected population for the North Park community at full community development is anticipated to be 73,170 persons. Therefore, according to General Plan guidelines for population-based parks, the community should be served by approximately 205 useable acres of park land, three recreation centers, and one aquatic complex.

**Existing and Proposed Parks:** There are approximately 16 acres of existing population-based parks within North Park, consisting of: The North Park Community Park, Montclair Neighborhood Park, Cedar Ridge Pocket Park, and four joint use facilities including the Alternative Learning for Behavior and Attitude (ALBA) School, and Birney, Garfield, and Jefferson Elementary schools. Through the community plan update process, staff and the community have identified future park sites that include the following:

- Five pocket parks: 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln Avenue, and Teresita & Maple Pocket Parks are on undeveloped public street rights-of-ways (paper streets) and will require street vacations and acquisition from the adjacent property owners. The North Park Mini Park is on the City-owned site located behind the North Park Theater. Switzer Canyon & 30<sup>th</sup> Street Pocket Park is located within City-owned open space.
- One joint-use site (equivalency): McKinley Elementary School Joint Use Facility is currently under construction.
- Two open space trails (equivalencies): The Juniper/34<sup>th</sup> Street Canyon and Switzer Canyon open space systems are on City-owned property and are proposed to be

improved with trail expansions and amenities.

- Six park sites within Balboa Park (equivalencies): Bird Park, East Mesa Mini Park, Morley Field Recreation Area, and Upas Street Mini Park will serve the North Park community; the Skate Park/Bike Skills Park will be shared by the Golden Hill and North Park communities; and the Pershing Sports Complex will be shared by the Downtown, Golden Hill, North Park, and Uptown communities.
- Three non-traditional park sites (equivalencies): Madison Avenue Pocket Park is located on developed City street right-of-way. Boundary Street Linear Park and Howard Avenue Pocket Park span developed City streets and Caltrans rights-of-ways, and will require acquisition from, or lease agreements with, Caltrans.

**Existing and Proposed Recreation Centers and Aquatic Complexes:** North Park will be served by a combination of existing and proposed recreation facilities.

- North Park Recreation Center (17,000 square feet) is a new facility proposed to replace and expand the existing, approximately 11,200 square foot facility located in North Park Community Park.
- Adult Center at North Park Community Park (3,000 square feet) is a new facility proposed to replace and expand the existing, approximately 1,700 square foot, facility located at the north end of North Park Community Park.
- Morley Field Recreation Center (28,000 square feet) is a new facility located in Balboa Park that will provide a gymnasium, a kitchen, multi-purpose, and community meeting rooms, consistent with the recommendations in the Balboa Park East Mesa Precise Plan.
- Morley Field Pétanque Center (1,548 square feet) is an existing, historic facility located in Balboa Park, proposed to be preserved and restored for community use.

The Bud Kerns Aquatic Complex has been identified as the aquatic complex for the community and will be shared with the Golden Hill community. The existing historic facility is proposed to be restored and renovated. Adjacent to the existing facility, a new facility will include a state-of-the-art aquatic complex, including a pool house with lockers, and additional swimming facilities such as children's and therapeutic pools.

**Park and Recreation Facilities Summary:** Through this community plan update, City staff and community members have identified approximately 16 acres of existing park land and 89 acres of new park land and park equivalency sites to meet the approximately 205 acres of population-based park needs. The approximately 100 acres of population-based park deficit will need to be fulfilled in the future by land acquisitions/donations or park equivalencies. The draft Recreation Element identifies existing recreation facilities and proposed projects that will provide for the community's recreation center and aquatic complex needs at full community development. These proposals represent significant achievements towards implementing the General Plan standards and the community's goals and needs. Staff will continue to work with community members to seek future opportunities for provision of parks and recreation facilities through potential land acquisitions, donations, grants, and other funding sources for project implementation.

For a full description of all the existing and proposed parks and recreation facilities see Table 7-1 within the draft North Park Community Plan Update Recreation Element.

## CONCLUSION

The adoption hearing process for these draft documents is beginning with this consideration by the Park and Recreation Board. The 45-day public review period for the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report began on May 31, 2016. The public review period has been extended an additional 14 calendar days, as a result of written requests from the Golden Hill Planning Committee and the North Park Planning Committee (per City Municipal Code §128.0307). The draft documents will go to the Planning Commission for a recommendation, and to the City Council for adoption in Fall of 2016.

## ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend approval of the Draft North Park Community Plan Recreation Element Update as presented; or
2. Recommend approval of the Draft North Park Community Plan Recreation Element Update with modifications; or
3. Do not recommend approval of the Draft North Park Community Plan Recreation Element Update.

Respectfully submitted,

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Alyssa Muto, Deputy Director  
Environmental and Policy Analysis Division

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Attachment: June 2016 Draft North Park Community Plan Recreation Element

The June 2016 Draft North Park Community Plan Update Recreation Element can also be accessed at the following website:

[https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/7\\_recreation.pdf](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/7_recreation.pdf)

The complete June 2016 Draft North Park Community Plan Update can be accessed at the following website:

[https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/north\\_park\\_community\\_plan\\_draft.pdf](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/north_park_community_plan_draft.pdf)

The Balboa Park East Mesa Precise Plan can be accessed at the following website:

<http://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/pdf/parkdesign/bpempp.pdf>

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