



REPORT

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO TO THE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

DATE ISSUED: June 8, 2016

REPORT NO. 102

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

SUBJECT: UPTOWN COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE – RECREATION ELEMENT

SUMMARY

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

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

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

1. November 19, 2015 – The Uptown Planners (UP) approved three motions; a summary of the motions, votes, and staff's response is provided below. See Attachment 1, November 19, 2015 Special Meeting Minutes:
 - a. Motion 1 (8-0-1): Prior to the adoption of the Uptown Community Plan, a Survey of Potential Park sites will be completed, and reviewed at a public hearing.
 - i. Staff provided the survey to the UP; the UP reviewed the survey and identified potential park sites at their meeting on May 3, 2016; the UP suggested those additional potential park sites to staff; staff is currently reviewing the proposed sites, and will incorporate appropriate sites into a final revised draft Recreation Element.
 - b. Motion 2 (6-2-1): A moratorium on the sale of any City owned lands in Uptown until the stipulations of the "motion regarding a survey of potential park sites" has been completed.
 - i. Staff has reviewed a site located at Goldfinch & Spruce Streets which is being considered for sale by the City, and will be recommending that the site be retained for park use. On April 12, 2016, the City Council approved the Real Estate Assets Department's (READ) recommendation to sell another site, the Truax House located on Laurel and Union Streets, requiring the preparation of a historical resources research report as a term and condition of the sale. If any other City owned sites in Uptown will be considered for

- sale prior to adoption of the Uptown Community Plan Update, staff will work with READ and community members to review the sites.
- c. Motion 3 (6-1-2): Uptown Planners supports the City in its response to public input to rescind its plans for recreation centers within Balboa Park.
 - i. The previously proposed recreation centers in Balboa Park have been deleted from the draft Recreation Element.
 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 – Uptown Community Plan Update: A Program Environmental Impact Report (Project No. 21002568/SCH No. – Pending) has been prepared for the Uptown Community Plan Update. (Public review date of June 10, 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 surrounding communities. The recommendations include the 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. This recommendation has been incorporated into the draft Recreation Element, with community support.

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. Uptown is an urban community where park equivalencies would be appropriate for satisfying some population-based park needs. The draft Recreation Element (Attachment 2) recommends a number of park equivalency proposals including sites in resource-based parks, joint-use school sites, a non-traditional site, and trails in open space.

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 Uptown 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 Uptown's recreational needs over the life of the plan.

DISCUSSION

Community Profile: The Uptown community planning area is approximately 2,700 acres, or approximately 4.2 square miles in size. The planning area is located just north of Downtown San Diego. It is bounded on the north by the steep hillsides of Mission Valley, on the east by Park Boulevard and Balboa Park, and on the west and south by Old San Diego and Interstate 5. Uptown contains some of the oldest and most distinctive neighborhoods in San Diego. The current population of Uptown is approximately 39,000 people, or three percent of the City's total population. The area consists of single family residential uses, apartments and condominiums, commercial and office uses, and two large hospitals; the University of California Medical Center and Mercy Hospital.

General Plan Standards: The projected population for the Uptown community at full community development is anticipated to be 55,700 persons. Therefore, according to General Plan guidelines for population-based parks, the community should be served by approximately 156 useable acres of park land, 38,000 square feet of recreation center space, and one aquatic complex.

Existing and Proposed Parks: There are approximately 18 acres of existing population-based parks within Uptown, consisting of: Mission Hills Park (including Pioneer Memorial Park), Old Trolley Barn Park, West Lewis Street Pocket Park, the Birney Elementary School and Roosevelt Middle School Joint Use Facilities, and the Sixth Avenue Children's Playground in Balboa Park. Through the community plan update process, staff and the community have identified future park sites that include the following:

- **Two neighborhood parks:** Mystic Park is proposed on portions of City and Caltrans street rights-of-ways adjacent to SR-163 and Washington Street, and will require a feasibility study prior to any property acquisition, design or construction. Reynard Way Neighborhood Park is on privately-owned property, and will require acquisition by purchase.
- **Nine pocket parks:** Bandini Street, Fir Street, First & Robinson, and Sixth Avenue Pocket Parks are located on privately-owned property, and will require acquisition

by purchase. Golden Gate Drive, Laurel Street, Olive Street, West Lewis Street Expansion, and West Maple Canyon Pocket Parks are located on City-owned park land.

- Two joint-use facilities (equivalencies): Joint use of multi-purpose courts are proposed at Florence Elementary School. Joint use of the future multi-purpose play field, multi-purpose hardcourts are proposed at the Grant K-8 School.
- Eight open space trails (equivalencies): The Bankers Hill, Buchanan Canyon, Curlew Canyon, Cypress Canyon/Marston, Hospice Point, Maple Canyon, Mission Hills, and University Heights open space systems are on City-owned open space property or undeveloped street rights-of-ways, and are proposed to be improved with trail expansions and amenities.
- Five park sites within resource-based parks (equivalencies): Freedom Park, Nate's Point Dog Off-leash Area, and Quince Street Mini-Park are located in Balboa Park and will serve the Uptown community; the Pershing Sports Complex, also located in Balboa Park, will be shared by the Downtown, Golden Hill, North Park, and Uptown communities. Presidio Neighborhood Park is located in Presidio Park, and will serve the Uptown community.
- One non-traditional park site (equivalency): Normal Street Linear Park is located on a developed City street right-of-way, and will be planned with some fixed improvements, as well as flexible spaces that provide opportunities for community events.

Proposed Recreation Centers and Aquatics Complex: Uptown will be served by the following proposed recreation facilities:

- Grant K-8 School Gymnasium (10,500 square feet) is the proposed joint-use of a future facility that would be designed and constructed by the San Diego Unified School District.
- Uptown Recreation Center – North (10,500 square feet) would provide community meeting and multi-purpose rooms.*
- Uptown Recreation Center – South (17,000 square feet) would provide a gymnasium, community meeting rooms, and multi-purpose rooms.*

*Staff will continue to seek sites for these facilities. Property acquisition may be required if the sites are not located within existing parks. Locating the North and South Recreation Centers in Balboa Park was considered, but not supported by community members.

A new, state-of-the-art, Aquatics Complex, including a pool house with lockers, and additional swimming facilities such as children's and therapeutic pools, is proposed to serve the Uptown community. However, a site has not been identified at this time.

Park and Recreation Facilities Summary: Through this community plan update, City staff and community members have identified approximately 18 acres of existing park land and 37 acres of new park land and park equivalency sites to meet the approximately 156 acres of population-based park needs. The approximately 101 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 the existing and proposed parks and recreation facilities see Table 7-1 within the draft Uptown Community Plan Update Recreation Element (Attachment 2).

CONCLUSION

The adoption hearing process for this draft document is beginning with this consideration by the Park and Recreation Board. The 45-day public review period for the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report will begin on June 10, 2016. The public review period has been extended an additional 14 calendar days, as a result of a written request from the Uptown Planners (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 Uptown Community Plan Recreation Element Update as presented; or
2. Recommend approval of the Draft Uptown Community Plan Recreation Element Update with modifications; or
3. Do not recommend approval of the Draft Uptown Community Plan Recreation Element Update.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments:

1. Uptown Planners – November 19, 2015 Special Meeting Minutes (excerpt)
2. June 2016 Draft Uptown Community Plan Recreation Element

The June 2016 Draft Uptown Community Plan Update can be accessed at the following website:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/profiles/uptown>

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