

College Area Community Plan Update

Parks Element

The College Area is currently severely “park-deficient” by City standard. City officials must act deliberately to develop enough parks and amenities for current and future additional residents.

Key points:

- According to the Planning Department, 80% of more than 400 respondents to their 2020 survey indicated that the park and recreational needs of their households were not being met in the College Area.
- The College Area has only one dedicated park, the Montezuma Neighborhood Park (1.6 acres, not all usable), and three joint-use agreements with Hardy Elementary School, Harriet Tubman Village Charter School, and The Language Academy for an additional 7.2 acres. School sites are only available for community use during non-school hours. On weekdays that is typically from 3:45 p.m. until dusk. According to the City, these sites do not have a full set of park amenities.
- As a point of reference: Had the City implemented its former Parks Master Plan (PMP, 1956), standard of 2.8 acres per 1,000 people, College Area residents should currently be benefitting from 86.3 acres of parkland based on a population of 24,839 residents (2020 census) instead of only 8.8 acres.
- Referring to Appendix D of the PMP: Based on the new standard of 100 points awarded per 1,000 residents (24,839), the community should be eligible for the value of 2,484 park points.
- City Planning staff recently evaluated the four current park areas using the new PMP (2021) and reported a total of 164.5 recreational value-based points which reflect current total size, access, and amenities.
- With only 164.5 of its expected 2,484 points worth of park space and amenities, the College Area is considered severely “park-deficient” with just 6.6% of its allowable park points.
- According to the General Plan (2008), standards exist which establish the population-based parks and recreation facilities that should already be within the

College Area. At 25,000 people, the College Area should be eligible for a Recreation Center, a community park of 13 acres minimum, and neighborhood parks of 3-13 acres within a one mile distance for every 5,000 residents.

- The City's Blueprint San Diego Plan is aiming for a potential buildout population of 85,371 College Area residents by the year 2050, based on 2.44 people per household. The potential parks deficit could increase to 8,372 points (8,537 points allowable by population minus the 164.5 points for existing parks).
- Community members are very concerned that the City's proposed land-use scenario will only result in a lot of little parklets and overlooks. In the City's own words, most of the new public spaces would occur as a 'string-of-pearls' with new development along the corridors. They might be visually appealing, but they won't provide for the legitimate park space residents need for dynamic recreational activities, playing fields for sports, etc.
- Such significant growth in the College Area will only increase demand for parks. College Area residents ask City officials to ensure that the City doesn't spur density in the College Area beyond its capacity to provide for the necessary commensurate infrastructure (i.e., adequate parks, police, fire, power, water, etc.).
- With only 6.6% of its current eligible parks, it is clear that the City needs to dedicate significant resources to develop quality park space which is accessible to people from all neighborhoods in the College Area. It is incumbent upon the City to find land or money in the budget for large, significant park space.
- The community's 7 Visions Plan is a very thoughtful approach to community planning by increasing its share of the region's growth in a manageable way. Among many goals articulated by residents, immediately providing 100% of the park points the current population is eligible for (by creating the recreation center and community park we are eligible for) is recommended to correct the significant existing deficit. A number of potential sites have already been identified in the 7 Visions Plan.
- The College Area needs and deserves a quantifiable amount of park space and quality amenities commensurate with its allowable park points. Sound planning is needed to meet the park and recreational needs of all residents now and throughout the Plan Update target year of 2050. Nobody, especially children, should go without access to a great park in their neighborhood!

For a more thorough discussion about the College Area parks element, please go to:

<https://sdnews.com/planning-for-parks-to-meet-current-and-future-college-area-needs/>

Please see accompanying photos of existing park space in the College Area.