



The City of San Diego

Staff Report

DATE ISSUED: July 16, 2021

TO: City Council

FROM: Planning Department

SUBJECT: Parks for All of Us – Parks Master Plan, General Plan Recreation Element Amendment, Park Impact Fee, and Chollas Creek Regional Park designation

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Council District(s): Citywide

OVERVIEW:

The Parks for all of Us initiative includes the City of San Diego Parks Master Plan, an amendment to the General Plan Recreation Element, an updated Citywide Park Development Impact Fee to replace all current community planning area-based existing park impact fees to enable the delivery of more parks faster, as well as the designation of the Chollas Creek Watershed as a Regional Park. While the City's current park system has resulted in many beautiful and enjoyable parks for some, it has also resulted in corresponding disinvestments for many; overall resulting in an inequitable park system. The lack of funding tools and land constraints have widened park shortfalls in these typically older, more densely populated neighborhoods, particularly adversely affecting Communities of Concern. The Parks Master Plan is needed to address these inequities so that everyone has equal access to safe, clean and thriving park spaces. The initiative will create a new system for all that prioritizes the greatest needs and allows us to plan holistically for the future.

The Environmental Policy Section of the Planning Department has prepared an addendum to the 2008 General Plan Program Environmental Impact Report No. 104495 (SCH # 2006091032), certified on March 10, 2008 (Attachment C). The General Plan EIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) applies to the addendum.

The General Plan Program EIR MMRP can be viewed at <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy//planning/genplan/pdf/peir/mmrp.pdf>.

The 2008 General Plan Environmental Impact Report can be viewed at <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/genplan/documents/peir>.

The information contained in the addendum reflects the independent judgement of the City of San Diego as the Lead Agency.

Since the time the Addendum was prepared, additional refinements and updates have been made to the Parks Master Plan. These changes have not changed the conclusions in the Addendum, as detailed in the memorandum dated May 27, 2021 from the Environmental Policy Section of the Planning Department (Attachment L).

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

ADOPT a resolution adopting the Addendum to Environmental Impact Report No. 104495/SCH No. 2006091032, which was finalized on May 8, 2020, and adopting the Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program.

ADOPT a resolution adopting amendments to the General Plan Recreation Element.

ADOPT a resolution adopting the City of San Diego Parks Master Plan.

ADOPT a resolution adopting a new Citywide Park Development Impact Fee to update and replace the existing park component of Community Planning Area-based Development Impact Fees, including a 5 percent administrative fee.

INTRODUCE an ordinance designating Chollas Creek Watershed as a San Diego Regional Park pursuant to San Diego Charter Section 55.2(a)(9).

DISCUSSION:

The 2008 General Plan identified the need for a new Parks Master Plan. The last Parks Master Plan was approved in 1956, when San Diego was considerably smaller and less diverse. Public engagement efforts began in 2018 to identify residents' perceptions of the City's parks and determine priorities for an updated vision of the City's park system. These efforts included 13 workshops and community events, a citywide statistically valid survey, online engagement forums, and recommendations from advisory boards.

The Parks Master Plan was originally released for public review in April 2020. During the public review period, over 500 comments were submitted. The item – Complete Communities: Play Everywhere was then presented and discussed at various public meetings, including the Park & Recreation Board, Mission Bay Park Committee, Balboa Park Committee, Community Planners Committee, Mobility Board, Planning Commission, and the Public Safety & Livable Neighborhoods Council Committee, before being heard by the City Council on November 9, 2020.

Since then, the Planning Department has taken the feedback and recommendations received from the public throughout the process to include the following significant and notable improvements for a more equitable, accessible and high-quality plan, an initiative now called Parks for All of Us.

A More Equitable Parks Plan

- New regional park policy calling for identification and designation of regional parks that are located in Communities of Concern. This item further includes an ordinance to formally dedicate Chollas Creek Watershed as a Regional Park.
- At least 80% of Citywide Park DIF will be prioritized to park deficient communities, with at least 50% of the total to be prioritized solely within Communities of Concern for a minimum of 5 years from the effective date of the Citywide Park Development Impact Fee.

- Creates an additional funding stream for Communities of Concern. The program promotes onsite park development in exchange for a 90% reduction of Park Development Impact Fees. The remaining 10% Park Development Impact Fee Payment will be placed into a Citywide fund with minimum committed funding levels to Communities of Concern.
- Highlights the importance of safe use and access of parks, and recognizes that a lack of safety diminishes a park's overall value to the community.
- Recognizes that the condition of the amenities within a park space can also diminish a park's overall value to the community.

Emphasis on Parkland Acquisition

- Further emphasis on the importance of procuring new parkland, with a specific goal of acquiring an additional 100 acres of population-based parks within 10 years. This goal is in addition to open space acquisition and joint use facilities.
- Increases available scoring points for parks to incentivize the acquisition of new land for parks – each incremental additional acreage of parkland receives 7 points.
- Requires that at least 20% of a community's park standard be achieved through parkland acreage.

Enhanced Commitment to Open Space Conservation and Historical Resources

- Includes modifications to further ensure protections of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP)/biodiversity and natural habitat in open spaces and parks.
- Specifically identifies historic resources in parks.
- Ensure that shade is provided in parks by trees to the maximum extent possible. Use of artificial shade structures should not substitute for natural shade from trees in parks.

Path Forward Identified

- Incorporates Implementation Action items needed to ensure successful implementation of the plan, including key equity focused initiatives to develop a more refined framework for prioritization of park investments, a Citywide Trails Master Plan, an update to the General Development Plan process for parks in Council Policy 600-33, an updated Park Condition Index, and a Park Project Priority Implementation List.

Park Scoring Values Simplified

- Normalizes the park standard to 100 points per 1,000 people.
- Adds new infographics explaining park scoring process, with specific identification and critical importance for future public input for a successful parks system.

Increased Park Activation and Programming Opportunities

- Increases recreational activation and programming within existing public spaces by allowing non-profits to use public spaces to generate revenue to fund park programming.
- Refined language to ensure that park concession uses are consistent with park uses while providing for activation opportunities for more safe and enjoyable parks.

Design Review Board for Parks

- Includes a new policy to explore the feasibility of forming a new park design review board comprised of individuals and professions that are reflective of the demographics of the City's population.

A. Parks for All of Us

The Parks for All of Us initiative includes the Parks Master Plan, amendments to the General Plan Recreation Element, the adoption of a new Citywide Park Development Impact Fee (Citywide Park DIF) to replace existing community-focused park development impact fees to enable the City to deliver more parks to more people more quickly in the areas with the greatest need, as well as the designation of the Chollas Creek Watershed as a Regional Park. As called for in the 2008 General Plan, a new Parks Master Plan (Attachment A) is proposed to replace a plan last approved in 1956.

Relevant parks and recreational programs should meet the changing needs and priorities of residents, both now and in the future. The system should offer safe, convenient access to a park space and recreation programming for everyone. Parks should be iconic, reflecting the unique qualities of their settings. The system should be sustainable. Park improvements, programs, and management strategies should contribute to economic, social, and environmental well-being.

Equity is a central value of the City's Parks Master Plan. Park planning and investments should address long-standing inequities in the City's parks system experienced by people that live in Communities of Concern and areas with the greatest park deficiencies – areas of the City where we know that the greatest needs exist – by ensuring equal access to meaningful recreational opportunities.

The City's park and recreation needs have evolved, influenced by changes in population demographics and development patterns. Communities vary in the quality and availability of park spaces due to patterns of historical growth. Prior development patterns have also left parts of the City with fewer connections to parks and natural areas. More growth located in existing neighborhoods increases demand for parks that meet the unique needs of these developed areas that contain limited land for new park spaces. Prioritizing parks in these neighborhoods that are experiencing the greatest rates of residential growth is critical.

The Parks Master Plan envisions bringing the many benefits of great parks and recreational opportunities to all City residents and visitors. Great parks feature quality recreational amenities and programs for diverse interests, ages, and abilities. These parks are comfortable, active, enjoyable, and safe spaces for social connections. Meaningful parks celebrate the history and identity of surrounding communities. They also protect and promote the health of sensitive natural resources and habitats. In a great system, parks join with lively public spaces, active streets, cultural amenities, trails, and conserved natural lands to make up a connected and accessible network of recreational experiences for everyone.

The proposed General Plan Recreation Element Amendment identifies various methods by which the City can sustain, connect, and expand its parks and recreational opportunities through the implementation of the Parks Master Plan. A transition to an updated park development impact fee that is Citywide is critical to the successful implementation of the Parks Master Plan vision for a better and more equitable parks system. And the designation of the Chollas Creek Watershed as a Regional Park is a long overdue recognition that is consistent with new policies in the Parks Master Plan calling for new regional parks that serve more residents, particularly in Communities of Concern.

A.1 A Plan Aligned with the City's Climate Goals

The Climate Action Plan (CAP), adopted in 2015, is a bold citywide plan to achieve greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions through local policy and action. CAP implementation is dependent upon adoption of additional ordinances, policies, and programs to implement the strategies and goals set forth in the CAP.

Specifically, the CAP calls for most new development to occur within transit priority areas (TPAs). CAP Strategy 3 specifically calls for strategic land use planning (locating land uses close to transit) and investments in biking, walking, and transit infrastructure as sources of significant Citywide GHG emissions reductions. To align new development with the City's climate goals, the Parks Master Plan identifies a new park standard, which enables the City to plan for parks and recreational experiences to serve these new development patterns. This new standard will allow for flexibility and innovation necessary to meet San Diego's changing and unique park needs. Proximity to transit, linkages to safe and protected bicycle facilities, as well as connections to other civic uses are critical to not only a thriving parks system, but to the City's climate goals as well.

Parks for All of Us also allows the City the opportunity to increase the City's urban tree canopy cover, consistent with CAP Strategy 5. The Parks Master Plan encourages tree canopy throughout the City's parks system, which not only helps achieve the City's tree canopy goals, but also provides needed natural shade in parks. In addition, the Parks Master Plan addresses the need for improved air quality through the planting of trees and monitoring air quality in parks.

A.2 An Equitable Parks System

An equity-based park planning approach recognizes that certain areas of a city are likelier to have fewer quality recreational opportunities due to factors such as the era of community development and historical disinvestment. Equity also considers the social and economic characteristics of communities, highlighting areas where residents may have a greater need for the benefits of public parks and programming based on criteria such as age and income levels.

Equity-driven frameworks guide capital investment to Communities of Concern and areas with the greatest park deficiencies to reduce the park gap and contribute to healthier, more vibrant neighborhoods. Equity goals go hand-in-hand with the Parks Master Plan's access goals toward achieving access to meaningful recreational experiences for everyone.

The Parks Master Plan's vision for a Citywide interconnected parks system for all of us including opportunities to access and enjoy more parks, regardless of where each individual lives, contributes to the City's ability to deliver parks sooner (see Section A.4). Prioritized investments in Communities of Concern and other areas that have park deficiencies are investments not just in those specific communities, but an investment for the entirety of the Citywide parks system. Ensuring prioritized investments in the areas where we know the greatest needs exist results in a better parks system for all of us.

The Parks Master Plan also importantly recognizes that in order to be truly equitable, the condition of the amenities within the City's parks must be addressed, and that truly equitable access to parks depends on other factors beyond what is within a park. Residents must feel safe accessing and using a park, and if that is not possible, the park's overall value is diminished.

A.3 A Plan for Better and Safer Access to Parks for All of Us

The Parks Master Plan establishes a travel time goal for reaching a meaningful recreational opportunity and using measurable criteria to prioritize future capital investments. The measurable criteria include the Citywide Climate Equity Index, park size and recreational value relative to surrounding population density, as well as walking, bicycling, and transit accessibility to prioritize future capital investments.

Access goals examine how easily people can travel to a park or recreation facility. Everyone should be able to safely get to an enjoyable recreational experience along a safe, enjoyable, and active route. We want to see people enjoying the outdoors not just inside of our parks, but for the entirety of their journey to and from our parks. The Parks Master Plan sets a new 10-20-30-40 minutes access and activation goal: a 10-minute walk and roll, 20-minute bike ride, and 30-minute transit ride to a park or recreation facility that will be enjoyed for *at least* 40 minutes. The 10-minute walk and roll is critical; everyone should be able to safely and enjoyably access walk or roll to a safe and enjoyable park. In addition to walking or rolling, biking and taking transit can increase the range and types of recreational opportunities that each resident can access. Focusing on activation within public park spaces is important to ensuring access to meaningful and enjoyable recreational opportunities.

Gaps in the access network highlight opportunities to plan for new park space near communities with limited access or enhance pedestrian, bike, and transit links that make it easier to get to parks, and the Parks Master Plan specifically calls for prioritizing investments to achieve these access goals in Communities of Concern and where the greatest amount of people will be served. The Parks Master Plan also recognizes that it is not enough for access itself to be provided; that access must be safe. If the access is not safe, the park is not accessible, and the park's overall value is significantly diminished.

A.4 A New Park Standard Focused on Delivering More Parks and Recreational Resources Faster

As the City continues to grow through more infill development located near transit, limited open land and rising acquisition costs make it increasingly difficult to meet the General Plan's current acreage-based park standard.

The Parks Master Plan identifies a new standard to allow the City to deliver more recreational opportunities in more places sooner – for everyone. This new standard is based on recreational value; size is one of many factors that represents a park's recreational value, but there are many other factors that are relevant to a park's overall value. The new proposed value-based standard establishes a point value to represent recreational opportunities within parks. Under this new standard, the size of a park continues to be a factor – but it is not the only factor – relevant in evaluating a park's value. The new standard also takes into account recreation opportunities, access, and activations.

The Value Standard is based on four communities that met the previous acreage standard of 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents in 2020. These communities' recreational amenities were scored, yielding a recreation value of 100 points per 1,000 people that is now proposed to be applied Citywide. The points reflect

the ability of parks to meet the needs of diverse users; promote physical activity; create a safe, active environment; and connect to the citywide transportation and recreation network. A recreational value of 100 points per 1,000 people represents a range of recreation experiences comparable to the opportunities available to residents in communities that previously achieved the acreage-based standard. The standard has been updated from the standard identified in the draft plan that was presented to City Council in 2020; this change was in response to public feedback received regarding increasing the values for park size, access to nature, and passive recreation, and the goal to simplify the scoring structure.

The new standard measures the inherent benefits of park spaces – their ability to support active recreation and exercise; encourage socializing; link to public transit, bike facilities, trails, and active public areas; and invite activity throughout the day. Since this standard stresses the value of amenities and features within a space, rather than its acreage alone, the standard recognizes the value of parks appropriate for diverse communities, from a large field park for active recreation to trails within a regional park or a small, lively and popular urban public plaza. A focus on value also rewards efforts to upgrade existing parks by adding amenities, pursuing joint use partnerships, and introducing new recreational activities.

A recreational value of 100 points per 1,000 people represents a range of recreation experiences comparable to the opportunities available to residents in communities that previously achieved the acreage-based standard. Allowing for flexibility is important to allow the City to deliver new parks and amenities to all of the City's communities, regardless of available land. Valuing upgrades to existing parks is something that not only was identified as a priority during public input, but also allows the City to invest in areas that have historically been overlooked for DIF park investments simply because additional land has not been available – areas that are located close to transit and that have the greatest needs for park investments – including the City's Communities of Concern. See pages 58-61 and Appendix D of the draft Parks Master Plan (Attachment A), for more detail regarding recreational value scoring. To ensure sufficient minimum land is available for parks within the City, at least 20 percent of the new park standard is required to be achieved through park acreage, and the scoring system provides incentives for the provision of each additional incremental acre added to the City's park system.

Based on valuable public input received, staff also proposes to regularly monitor the implementation of the Parks Master Plan and make refinements as needed to ensure its success.

A.5 A Community-Driven Parks Process

Parks for All of Us is intended to be a community-driven process so that communities can have more input into the new park investments that are needed. Often needed park projects can be identified through a Community Plan Update process, or through the development of a public facilities plan for an individual community. While this is one way to provide input, communities can wait years before these plans are updated. And oftentimes, by the time enough funding has been identified for a project in a community plan, the needs of the community may have changed.

All new parks and upgrades to existing parks must continue to follow the public process for General Development Plans for parks outlined in Council Policy 600-33. The public workshops required by Council Policy 600-33 are intended to ensure that the public's needs are reflected in the final design, and that projects that the community would like to see are eligible for Citywide Park DIF funding – no matter its size and no matter what it entails. What matters is that a potential future project is something that is valued and wanted by the community, as determined through this public process. This public input process is so critical, and an update to the process in Council Policy 600-33 is also included as an implementation action to ensure that this process is updated to ensure the success of this critical public engagement process.

Additionally, because the current DIFs are charged on a community-by-community basis based on particular projects identified through this process, and because constitutional and state law requires that the DIFs collected be spent for the purposes for which they were collected, under the current system, the community often has limited opportunity to provide input on current park needs. Parks projects that are not specifically identified – or that do not involve an increase in parkland acquisition are overlooked for investments that the community may desire.

The new Parks Master Plan park standard is designed to allow for more community input into the parks needed today and into the future. The Citywide Park DIF is based on the new park standard, which allows for the use of DIF funding for investments that increase recreational value in the City park system, as determined through input from the public. Under this new standard, projects that the community would like to see can be eligible for Citywide Park DIF funding – no matter its size and no matter what it entails. However, regardless of the type of funding, all City parks will continue to be developed through a public process in accordance with Council Policy 600-33.

The Parks Master Plan will also guide the City's Community Plan Updates and community engagement will also be critical to guide the long-term planning and identification of park and recreational opportunities to achieve the park standard in each of the City's communities.

A.6 Bold New Policies for a Safe and Enjoyable Parks System for All of Us

Achieving the vision of Parks for All of Us will take time, committed resources, and coordinated investments. Transforming the parks system that the City has today into the system that the City wants will require innovative delivery strategies, sustainable funding approaches, and a continued focus on creating great places across the City.

The implementation framework for the Parks Master Plan consists of goals and policies in 13 categories.

- Parks + Programming - Opportunities for everyone to play, explore, learn, and interact.
- Equity - Addressing long-standing inequities experienced by people in Communities of Concern and other marginalized populations allowing everyone to fairly share the same benefits from parks and attain full

and equal access to recreational opportunities regardless of one's background, identity, ability, and location.

- Access - Access within a 10-minute walk and roll, 20-minute bike ride, and 30-minute transit ride for everyone to a park or recreational experience that can be enjoyed for at least 40 minutes.
- Activation - Safe and inviting public spaces that support positive experiences for everyone and that further equity and access goals.
- Co-Benefits - Multi-purpose park spaces that improve overall quality of life.
- Community Building - Parks that are the focal points of our communities.
- Mobility as Recreation - A Citywide network of safe, active recreational links that connects people with parks and public spaces.
- Arts and Culture - Parks that express the unique identities of our communities and connect people to arts and cultural experiences.
- Conservation, Sustainability, and Resilience - A parks system that preserves and enhances our natural landscape, while making the City more active and resilient.
- Partnerships - A collaborative network of partners and resources that improves and expands recreational opportunities throughout the City.
- Operations and Maintenance - An efficient, durable, and well-maintained parks system that provides consistent, long-term quality to everyone.
- Regional Parks - Well-maintained and accessible regional parks that showcase unique scenic, natural, historical or cultural resources, while offering everyday recreation, with focused identification and designation of regional parks that are located in Communities of Concern.
- Funding - Sustainable, equitable, and dedicated funding sources to invest in the City's parks system.

Together, this mix of programs, tools, and partnerships outlines a sustainable strategy to expand and upgrade the City's parks into the envisioned world-class equitable parks system for all.

B. A Long Overdue Designation of the Chollas Creek Watershed as a Regional Park

The Parks Master Plan specifically calls for the need to identify and designate Regional Parks in Communities of Concern. The Chollas Creek Watershed extends from La Mesa and Lemon Grove into areas of the City of San Diego located mostly to the south of State Route 94, specifically traversing the neighborhoods of City Heights, Eastern Area, Encanto, Southeastern San Diego, and Barrio Logan. It is an asset to the neighborhoods it serves as well as to residents and visitors from across the City and region, characterized by a rich history and unparalleled historical, biological, and cultural resources. Chollas Creek was once well-known to Native Americans, who used it for settlement and as a major trail through the region. It also has a long geological history evidenced by a number of paleontological sites.

The Chollas Creek Enhancement Program identifies a vision for the Chollas Creek Watershed as a linear park encompassing multiple branches of Chollas Creek, with design that results in park space for the community, restored creek channels, and providing active linkages through the communities. The Chollas Creek Watershed provides endless opportunities to bring diverse neighborhoods together through a watershed-wide system of trails and parks, while also serving as an incredible visitor

attraction; and Charter section 55.2(a)(9) defines San Diego Regional Parks as those parks that serve regional residents and/or visitor populations as determined by ordinance of the City Council. The Chollas Creek Watershed is worthy of such a regional designation; a designation that is long overdue.

C. A More Equitable and Efficient Citywide Park Development Impact Fee

The City currently maintains a Development Impact Fee (DIF) program which provides funding for public facilities projects throughout the City, including transportation, fire services, libraries and parks. Fees are currently determined, collected, and expended within each Community Planning Area. The Planning Department is planning to transition toward Citywide fees to enable the City to deliver infrastructure much sooner.

A updated Citywide Park DIF is the first step toward implementation of Infrastructure Now. Currently, the City's impact fees vary widely between communities and since the funds are specifically earmarked for specific parks in specific communities, this model restricts the City's ability to deliver parks sooner even when money is otherwise available. It also limits the City's ability to comprehensively plan for parks on a Citywide basis, failing to recognize that residents should have access to not only quality parks in their own neighborhoods, but also access to a diverse array of recreational experiences throughout the City. And it has resulted in inequitable investments in parks throughout the City with significantly lower expenditures of development fees expended in Communities of Concern.

Moving to a Citywide Park DIF would not only normalize widely varying fees across the City but would most importantly provide a dedicated funding source that recognizes the reality that the City's parks are intended to be used by everyone, and enables the City to leverage the funds to deliver parks much quicker. This will also allow the City to begin to address inequities in the parks system by prioritizing investments where they are needed the most. Investments throughout the City are investments in the City's park system – a system that is available to serve everyone.

This updated Citywide Park DIF, which will replace the existing parks components of individual community plan area-based fees, will allow the future fees collected to be invested throughout the City and will allow the City to focus its investments in the areas with greatest needs, to achieve an equitable and balanced Citywide park system. The fee will enable faster and greater delivery of parks and recreation facilities, and more efficient use of land to provide more recreational assets. The fee also includes a five percent administrative fee.

Funds collected under the existing community-based DIFs is legally required to be retained in those funds to be spent solely for the purposes for which they were collected, meaning that such funds will remain in the communities in which they were collected and spent on facilities within those communities. Communities with such fund balances will also be eligible for additional funding to complete any unfunded portions of improvements within those communities from the updated Citywide Park DIF.

C.1 A Standards Based Fee Allowing for Better Community Participation and Faster Delivery of Parks for All of Us

As discussed in Section A.5, the Citywide Park DIF is based on the new park standard identified in the Parks Master Plan of 100 Recreational Value points per 1,000 residents, which is intended to provide better opportunities for

community input on park needs based on current and future needs, rather than past needs. Based on this standard, a Citywide Park Development Impact Fee Nexus Study has been prepared to identify the maximum allowable fee that the City can impose based on this park standard. The Nexus Study identifies the required nexus between the impacts of new development and the burdens posed to park facilities by that development. Specifically, the addition of additional housing units results in more people, which results in the need for more parks, in accordance with the standard of 100 recreational value points per 1,000 residents set forth in the Parks Master Plan. See Attachment H (Citywide Park Development Impact Fee Nexus Study). With the knowledge of the maximum fee that can legally be imposed, it is important to adopt a fee that is financially feasible and that will also ensure that the City meets its climate, housing, and equity goals. See Section C.3 for additional information regarding the proposed fee amounts.

Recognizing that investing parks in areas of the City experiencing the most growth, the Parks for All of Us initiative includes incentives for developers of new housing units to build parks to meet their parks requirements. The provision of parks by developers will continue to be subject to the public process outlined in Council Policy 600-33, while providing options for infill developers to build on-site parks, where options are currently very limited. Where developers provide these parks, payment of the DIF is largely not required – aside from a small amount of 10 percent of the otherwise applicable DIF, which will be used to prioritize investments in Communities of Concern. In exchange, the developer’s park standard is also reduced by 10 percent. For developers that provide long-term maintenance of these park spaces, additional incentives (a reduction of 25 percent in the development’s park standard) are also provided. Developers that provide onsite parks with long-term maintenance bring more immediate delivery of parks into the City’s parks system. See Parks Master Plan Appendix D for additional detail.

Developers will also have the option to provide off-site parks within Communities of Concern to satisfy their development’s park requirements. Just as with on-site parks, the parks must be accessible to the public, be approved through a General Development Plan process in accordance with Council Policy 600-33, and the park must also consist of new public park space in the Community of Concern.

C.2 Park Fees that Match the Size of a Housing Unit Means More Housing for All of Us

The Parks Master Plan aligns with our housing goals and will assist in making housing more affordable by proposing a scaled fee based on unit size. Residential scaling is a process by which a maximum development impact fee is scaled according to dwelling unit size. In this method, the square footage of a unit or product type is used as an indicator of household population size. The intention of scaling impact fees is to more accurately reflect the true impact of a residential unit on the need for the public facility for which a fee is being collected. Larger units can accommodate more people, thereby posing greater burdens, and smaller units typically accommodate fewer people.

One of the guidelines for developing a scaled fee structure for residential units is to develop a structure that can be scaled as a percentage of the maximum residential fee authorized within the Citywide Park DIF program. Therefore, the maximum authorized fee for residential units is used as the high point of the

scale (i.e. 100%), in which only the largest units pay, while the remaining smaller units would pay a percentage of the maximum fee, to reflect the most accurate infrastructure needs that would result from a unit – depending on the size of the particular unit, since smaller units generally house less people than larger units. See Attachment I (City of San Diego DIF Program – Residential Scaling Methodology).

New residential development throughout the City would pay the Citywide Park DIF, which would be right-sized to reflect a housing unit's parks needs based on size of the individual dwelling unit, and thus, the amount of people that would require parks for recreational needs. Therefore, because smaller units tend to be occupied by fewer people than larger units, a lower fee would be applied to smaller units. Right sizing the fee to match the true impacts of a unit provides incentives for more housing units that are affordable to more people throughout the City.

C.3 An Updated Citywide Park DIF Based on a Comprehensive Nexus Study Aligned with City's Housing and Climate Goals

The updated Citywide Park DIF will be the City's first DIF applied on a Citywide basis that is tailored to the burdens posed by units of varying sizes. While historically the City imposed a one-size fits all fee for all housing units – regardless of size – the updated proposed Citywide Park DIF would vary depending on unit size. Another significant change is that rather than having widely varying park DIFs in each of the City's separate communities, a more consistent fee is proposed. The Nexus Study (Attachment H) identifies maximum ranges of Park DIF that the City can legally impose on new residential units on a Citywide basis.

In conjunction with the Nexus Study, the Planning Department explored various ranges that make the most sense in terms of aligning DIF with the City's climate, housing, and equity goals. A simple calculator has been developed to easily calculate a project's park DIF based on location, and unit type and size, and the specific fee amounts are identified in the draft resolution accompanying this item.

In general, the fees range would range from about \$11,300 for a 1,000 square foot single-family unit to about \$18,000 for a unit larger than 2,500 square feet; from about \$8,800 for a 500 square foot multi-family unit to about \$14,000 for a unit larger than 1,300 square feet located outside of a transit priority area; and about \$6,600 for a 500 square foot multi-family unit to about \$10,500 for a unit larger than 1,300 square feet located within a transit priority area. Fees for senior housing units would range from about \$8,800 to \$10,100 outside of a transit priority area, and about \$6,600 to \$7,600 within a transit priority area. And fees for group housing projects would be about \$5,300 per bed outside of a transit priority area, and \$4,000 per bed inside of a transit priority area.

To encourage the construction of new housing units in line with the City's priorities the following DIF incentives would be available:

- Affordable Housing Incentive - Affordable housing units restricted for 55 years at 80 percent AMI or below would be subject to a fee that is 25 percent lower than the rates identified above. The purpose of this

incentive is to realize the City's housing goals to increase the supply of affordable housing.

- Moderate Income Housing Incentive – Moderate income housing units restricted for 55 years at 81 to 120 percent AMI would be subject to a fee that is 20 percent lower than the rates identified above. The purpose of this incentive is to realize the City's housing goals to increase the supply of moderate income housing.
- Transit Priority Area (TPA) Incentive – Development located within a TPA would be subject to a fee 25 percent lower as highlighted above. This is consistent with the City's climate goals which call for encouraging housing to be located near transit.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Incentive – Units that meet the City's Voluntary Accessibility Program, San Diego Municipal Code section 145.4001*et seq.*, would be subject to a fee that is 2.5 percent lower than the rates identified above.
- Sustainable Building Incentive – Developments that achieve LEED Platinum or Living Building Challenge certification would be subject to a fee that is 5 percent lower than the rates identified above.

Multiple fee incentives may apply to a development project; however, the total fee reduction may not exceed 50 percent. The Affordable Housing, Moderate Income Housing, and ADA incentives apply only to units that qualify, the incentive may not be applied to the entire housing development unless all the units qualify for the incentive.

Using the latest housing projections for the City for remaining residential capacity, based on the park development fees that would be collected under the existing fees applied across each of the City's communities, the City would have collected approximately \$1.11 billion with full buildout under the City's General Plan. Under the proposed Citywide Park DIF, including the 25 percent reduction incentives identified above, it is projected that the City would collect approximately \$1.28 billion in DIF fees for parks. This shows that while providing incentives for more housing in the areas of the City that are most aligned with the City's climate goals, the City can increase its overall revenue for capital park projects from developer fees, with the added benefit of consolidating the funding to be able to most effectively and quickly deliver new parks.

These fees represent an amount that is representative of the average fees that currently apply across the City throughout each of the different communities, taking into account an approximately 8 percent increase to reflect increased costs since the fee was originally proposed in 2020 and the proposed take effect date of July 1, 2022.

The City's current park DIFs currently vary widely by community, many having not been updated in several years. The current park fees range from less than \$1,000 to as high as \$29,000 per unit. For new housing units in the areas with the highest current park fees, fees will decrease significantly, while for some communities where the fees have not been updated in several years, and have not been determined based on Citywide park needs, fees may increase. Overall, the proposed fee ranges are consistent with existing averages across the communities for parks fees.

Overall, in addition to a decrease in fees in many of the communities located furthest from transit, decreases are also anticipated to be seen in the communities where the City anticipates seeing the most new housing coming

on line within its TPAs, based on the City's newly-adopted Housing Element, adopted community plans, and the City's Climate Action Plan. See Attachment J for a full list of existing parks fees by community planning area.

C.4 Prioritized Investments Where the Needs are the Greatest

A Citywide Park DIF enables the City to prioritize recreational investments throughout the City. The Park Master Plan specifically calls for the need to prioritize park investments in the areas with the greatest needs, including park deficient communities, Communities of Concern, and areas experiencing significant growth. To address current park inequities in the City's system, at least 80 percent of Citywide Park DIF will be prioritized to park deficient communities, with at least 50 percent of the total to be prioritized solely within Communities of Concern for a minimum of 5 years. While the funds would be prioritized in these areas, the funds would ultimately be used to fund park facilities throughout the City.

Over the past 10 years, approximately 80 percent of park DIF funds have been collected to be spent on parks in the northern areas of the City. This disparity in funding has resulted in marked inequities that exist today in the City's parks system, with parks in the northern areas of the City tending to enjoy more quality park experiences, and areas in the southern portion of the City tending to experience fewer parks, with fewer amenities, programming, and reduced levels of safety, cleanliness, and enjoyability. Funding must be prioritized in the areas of the City with the greatest needs to begin to address the inequities in the City's parks system.

To avoid refunding DIF funds not expended within the required time period under the Mitigation Fee Act, the Parks Master Plan calls for the allocation of no more than 20 percent of Citywide Park DIF to communities outside of park deficient communities with park development projects which are approaching full funding.

The Engineering & Capital Projects Department is currently working on an update to Council Policy 800-14, Prioritizing Capital Improvement Program Projects. Taking guidance from a new Parks Master Plan, it is anticipated that this update will also include a new focus on Communities of Concern, park deficient communities, and communities anticipated to experience the most residential growth. This update will help the City Council evaluate projects and allocate funds toward Citywide park projects based on measurable metrics. Further refined prioritization metrics continue to be critical and are identified as key implementation action items in the Parks Master Plan framework to ensure successful implementation and achieve the vision of the plan.

Communities of Concern consist of communities that have very low or low access to opportunity as identified in the Citywide Climate Equity Index, developed in coordination with an Equity Stakeholder Working Group Prioritizing and investing program funds within Communities of Concern and park deficient communities will help to address existing inequities in our parks system. Additionally, Communities of Concerns and park deficient communities typically have higher current and future population densities than most other areas of the City; therefore, prioritizing and investing program funds within these areas will provide the most benefit to the highest number of residents.

C.5 Development Impact Fee Funding Requirements

The Mitigation Fee Act requires that fees collected be spent only for the purposes for which they were collected. For all funds collected through existing community-based DIF, those funds will remain in dedicated funds for use within the community in which they were collected. The new Parks DIF will be available to supplement those funds, as well as to fund new parks projects that increase recreational value throughout the City.

City Strategic Plan Goal(s)/Objective(s):

Goal #1: Provide high quality public service

Objective #1: Promote a customer-focused culture that prizes accessible, consistent, and predictable delivery of services

Objective #2: Improve external and internal coordination and communication

Objective #4: Ensure equipment and technology are in place so that employees can achieve high quality public service

Goal #2: Work in partnership with all of our communities to achieve safe and livable neighborhoods

Objective #2: Reduce and prevent crime

Objective #3: Invest in quality infrastructure

Objective #4: Foster services that improve quality of life

Objective #5: Cultivate civic engagement and participation

Objective #6: Decrease unsheltered homelessness

Goal #3: Create and sustain a resilient and economically prosperous City

Objective #1: Create dynamic neighborhoods that incorporate mobility, connectivity, and sustainability

Objective #2: Increase water independence

Objective #4: Prepare and respond to climate change

Fiscal Considerations:

There is no immediate fiscal impact; however future funding will be needed to achieve the Parks Master Plan's vision.

An updated Citywide Park DIF will result in the availability of new funding that can be spent more readily to deliver more parks throughout the City much faster than the existing DIF program where funding is constrained to specific areas and projects. A 5 percent administrative fee is proposed.

Charter Section 225 Disclosure of Business Interests:

N/A; there is no contract associated with this action.

Environmental Impact:

The City of San Diego previously prepared and certified the General Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) (Project No. 104495/SCH No. 2006091032). The 2008 General Plan Recreation Element, which was analyzed in the General Plan PEIR, identified the need for a comprehensive Parks Master Plan. The proposed Parks for All of Us initiative (herein referred to as the "project") fulfills the goals of the 2008 General Plan Recreation Element through the inclusion of a City of San Diego Parks Master Plan, an amendment to the General Plan Recreation Element, and a updated Citywide Park Development Impact Fee. Based upon a review of the current project, it has been determined pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 that:

- a. There are no new significant environmental impacts not considered in the previous EIR;

- b. No substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken; and
- c. There is no new information of substantial importance to the project.

Therefore, an Addendum to the General Plan PEIR (Attachment C) has been prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15164. The project is consistent with the analysis in the General Plan PEIR and there would be no new significant environmental impacts which were not already considered in the previous PEIR. Additionally, the updated Citywide Park Development Impact Fee does not identify any particular course of action with respect to the development of any particular parks project, and is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15378(b)(4) and (5). As such, this action is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3).

Additionally, since the time the Addendum was prepared, additional refinements and updates have been made to the Parks Master Plan. These changes have not changed the conclusions in the Addendum, as detailed in the memorandum dated May 27, 2021 from the Environmental Policy Section of the Planning Department. Furthermore, the project is consistent with the Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices (SCH No. 201906003), which was certified on November 9, 2020. Additionally, the updated Citywide Parks Development Impact Fee does not identify any course of action with respect to the development of any particular park project, and, thus, is not a "project" pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378(b)(4) and (5).

Equal Opportunity Contracting Information (if applicable):

This item is exempt from EOC review per the memorandum dated August 7, 2019.

Previous Council and/or Committee Actions:

On March 15, 2018, the Parks Master Plan work plan was presented as an information item to the Planning Commission.

On March 21, 2018, the Parks Master Plan work plan was presented as an information item to the Public Safety and Livable Neighborhood Committee.

On May 15, 2018, the Parks Master Plan work plan was presented as an information item to the City Council.

On October 23, 2018, the Parks Master Plan was presented as an information item to the Community Planners Committee to solicit input.

On October 2, 2019, the Parks Master Plan was presented as an information item to the Active Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to solicit input.

On October 9, 2019, the Parks Master Plan was presented as an information item to the Community Forest Advisory Board to solicit input.

On November 21, 2019, the Parks Master Plan was presented as an information item to the Park and Recreation Board to solicit input.

On May 26, 2020, the Parks Master Plan was presented as an information item to the Community Planners Committee to solicit input.

On June 1, 2020, the Parks and Recreation Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Parks Master Plan and General Plan Recreation Element Amendment.

On June 2, 2020, the Mission Bay Park Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Parks Master Plan and General Plan Recreation Element Amendment.

On June 4, 2020, the Balboa Park Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Parks Master Plan and General Plan Recreation Element Amendment.

On June 10, 2020, the Parks Master Plan and General Plan Recreation Element Amendment was presented as an information item to the Community Forest Advisory Board to solicit input.

On June 18, 2020, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Addendum, Parks Master Plan, and General Plan Recreation Element Amendment with recommendations (see Attachment K). Staff has updated the draft Parks Master Plan to reflect the Planning Commission's recommendations to refine policies related to the recognition of mental health benefits that parks provide by valuing habitat restoration that can be accessed by the public, the use of oversized streets and unused alleys for recreation, and the need to promote multilingual and culturally-specific programming, and various other changes as shown in the revised Plan.

On June 30, 2020, the Community Planners Committee voted 22-1-1 to recommendation significant revisions to the Parks Master Plan and Recreation Element Amendment.

On July 1, 2020, the City's Mobility Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Parks Master Plan and General Plan Recreation Element.

On July 15, 2020, the Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Council Committee voted 4-0 to move the Parks Master Plan, General Plan Recreation Element, and Citywide Park Development Impact Fee for consideration by the full City Council, without a recommendation.

On November 9, 2020, the Parks Master Plan was heard at City Council and failed to receive approval by a vote of 4-5. The Planning Department was directed to revise the Plan based on the Councilmembers' comments and to bring it back to the City Council in 2021.

On June 17, 2021, the Parks and Recreation Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Parks for All of Us initiative with the following Board recommendations:

- (1) evaluate 20 percent allocation request proposal for park land acquisition (see PARC proposal),
- (2) create an ongoing monitoring program to keep the Parks Master Plan continuously updated,
- (3) recommend to the City Council that Parks & Recreation and Planning provide an implementation plan for Chollas Creek Watershed Regional Park to the next level by requesting a RFP for a master plan, and
- (4) offer a better definition of Communities of Concern and low/moderate income areas (Climate Equity Index).

On June 22, 2021, the Community Planners Committee voted to support the Citywide Park Development Impact Fee, and to support to the Parks Master Plan with incorporation of recommendations submitted by the Parks and Recreation Coalition. The vote also supported ensuring that Communities of Concern are prioritized for park investments.

On July 14, 2021, the Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods City Council Committee voted unanimously to recommend adoption of Parks for All of Us, with the following requested amendments:

- That the implementation of the Parks Master Plan be monitored annually by the Office of Race and Equity through a report to City Council;

That the Citywide Park Development Impact fee resolution be amended to include a section with the following language, after Section 16, "the Citywide Park DIF prioritized investments in park deficient communities and Communities of Concern, as determined by the Mayor or their designee shall be approved annually by City Council."

Add language to Section 16 in the draft resolution approving the Citywide Park Development Impact Fee to read: "Park deficient communities shall be determined as shown in the Existing Conditions Report for the Parks Master Plan, dated June 2019, Figures 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3 on an interim basis until a Park Needs Index is completed, as identified in Section 4.8 of the Parks Master Plan."

Amend sentence from Appendix D, page 19, Local Recreational Value in Parks to read: "The minimum score for any park shall be no less than 7." to "The minimum score for any park shall be no less than 3.5."

Replace sentence from Appendix D, page 20, Local Recreational Value in Parks to read: "Parks under an acre will receive 0.875 points for each 1/8 acre." with the following sentence, "Fractional park acreage shall be awarded 0.875 points for each 1/8 acre."

Add to Appendix D, Cumulative Recreational Value for a Community Planning Area, page 19: "No less than 20% of a community's local recreational value points must be scored in the Park Size category."

Add a policy section with the following language: "Development projects that were not accounted for in a community plan should provide parks onsite to address the project's park needs, as appropriate."

Key Stakeholders and Community Outreach Efforts:

The Planning Department, along with the Parks and Recreation Department, has conducted major public input activities as part of the initial information gathering phase: regional workshops in each Council District and Downtown for a total of 10 workshops, three Citywide visioning workshops, two online engagement activities, pop-up community events, and stakeholder interviews with representatives of other jurisdictional entities and non-profit organizations. The feedback has been integrated into the benchmarking and technical analyses to identify needs and priorities across the City's parks and recreation system.

A statistically valid survey of more than 1,800 randomly selected residents was also conducted to gauge recreational use, interests, and needs. The results identified priorities for park, facilities and programming investments. The top priorities were similar across all City Council Districts. The top recreation facility priorities included beaches and shoreline parks, small pocket or neighborhood parks, open spaces and trails, off-leash dog parks, and aquatic complexes. Priorities were focused on upgrades to existing City parks, 95 percent of respondents found upgrades to existing public parks very important or somewhat important. Just over two-thirds (67 percent) of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the City's existing Parks and Recreation facilities and programs.

Public outreach included the following:

1. Ten Regional Open House Workshops were held to discuss the Parks Master Plan; the dates and locations are listed below. Regional workshops were used to inform the public on the planning process, existing conditions of parks and recreation facilities and to obtain needs and priorities for the future.

- Council District 1 Regional Open House Workshop at the Standley Recreation Center on 06/21/18
 - Council District 2 Regional Open House Workshop at Robb Field on 06/11/18
 - Council District 3 Regional Open House Workshop at the Golden Hill Recreation Center on 06/25/18
 - Council District 4 Regional Open House Workshop at the Skyline Hills Recreation Center on 06/19/18
 - Council District 5 Regional Open House Workshop at Black Mountain Middle School on 06/14/18
 - Council District 6 Regional Open House Workshop at the Canyonside Recreation Center on 06/20/18
 - Council District 7 Regional Open House Workshop at the Linda Vista Recreation Center on 06/06/18
 - Council District 8 Regional Open House Workshop at the San Ysidro Community Activity Center on 06/27/18
 - Council District 9 Regional Open House Workshop at the Mid-City Gym on 06/18/18
 - Downtown Regional Open House Workshop at the Downtown Central Library on 06/12/18
2. Three Visioning Workshops were held to discuss the Parks Master Plan; the dates and locations are listed below. Visioning Open House Workshops were used to understand existing conditions for parks, recreation facilities and programs, identify goals and policies for the parks and recreation system, and develop park and facility improvement priorities and recommendations.
- Visioning Open House Workshop in San Ysidro on 04/27/19
 - Visioning Open House Workshop at Balboa Park on 04/23/19
 - Visioning Open House Workshop in Carmel Valley on 05/04/19
3. City Staff attended two community events to inform the public on the status of the Parks Master Plan and solicit input and gather information on needs and priorities. These events are listed below.
- Clean Air Day at the Boys & Girls Club in Encanto on 10/05/19
 - CiclosDias at Fair@44 in City Heights on 10/27/19
4. City staff, in partnership with the Institute for Local Government, hosted an online public engagement forum that was attended by well over 300 attendees on July 16, 2020.
5. Additionally, staff promoted the Parks Master Plan through a variety of media outlets including social media posts on Facebook and Instagram. Staff has provided regular updates on the Parks Master Plan through the Planning Department website and presented to various stakeholder groups throughout the planning process.

Mike Hansen

Department Director

Jeff Sturak

Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Attachments:

Attachment A: Draft Parks Master Plan

Attachment B: Draft Amendment to General Plan Recreation Element

Attachment C: Addendum to the 2008 General Plan Program Environmental Impact Report No. 104495 EIR (SCH # 2006091032)

Attachment D: Parks Master Plan Workplan

Attachment E: Parks Master Plan Existing Conditions Report

Attachment F: Parks Master Plan Community Survey Report

Attachment G: Parks Master Plan Needs and Priorities Report

Attachment H: Citywide Park Development Impact Fee Nexus Study

Attachment I: City of San Diego DIF Program – Residential Scaling Methodology

Attachment J: City of San Diego Current DIF Program

Attachment K: Planning Commission 's Motion recommending adoption of a Resolution approving an amendment to the General Plan Recreation Element and City of San Diego Parks Master Plan

Attachment L: Parks Master Plan Environmental Review Memo