

DATE: April 25, 2018

FROM: Planning Department

SUBJECT: Work Plan for City of San Diego Parks Master Plan

OVERVIEW:

The City of San Diego Parks Master Plan is a citywide planning project to create a policy document that will provide guidance for a balance of parks and recreation opportunities throughout the city. This three-year planning effort includes citywide public outreach to develop the policy document and identify recreational programming needs and strategies to implement the Parks Master Plan.

DISCUSSION OF ITEM:

The existing parks and recreation system includes over 42,000 acres of developed parkland, beaches and shoreline parks, and open space parks, that offer a diverse range of recreational opportunities. The Parks and Recreation Department offers approximately 100 recreation programs and currently manages:

- Two hundred and twenty-nine (229) Population-based parks, including seven (7) Skate parks and seventeen (17) Dog off-leash parks.
- Three (3) municipal golf complexes, including Torrey Pines, Mission Bay and Balboa golf courses.
- Sixty-one (61) open space parks.
- Thirteen (13) Aquatic Complexes and fifty-seven (57) Recreation Centers.

Purpose of the Parks Master Plan

The City of San Diego, like most cities across America, is entering an era of innovation for parks and recreation planning and management. Driven by changes in community demographics and lifestyles, the nature of play and leisure is changing. As communities grow and develop, the City must also reexamine the way it defines and meets desired service levels. The Parks Master Plan offers an exciting opportunity to build on the current parks and recreation system. It will explore needed strategies for delivering a diverse and meaningful array of parks, recreation facilities, and programs. The Parks Master Plan will serve as a long-term road map for creating a public parks and recreation system that is relevant, accessible, sustainable, and equitable, and reflective of the unique qualities of San Diego.

General Plan Goals for the Parks Master Plan

Within the City's General Plan (2008), the Recreation Element contains goals and policies to build upon the City's natural environment and resources, to enhance existing recreation facilities and services, to help achieve an equitable balance of recreational resources, and to adapt to future recreation needs. One of the primary goals of the Recreation Element is the "Preparation of a citywide, comprehensive Parks Master Plan (PMP) to guide park and open space acquisition, design and development, recreational programming and needed maintenance over the next 20-30 years." The General Plan states that the PMP should provide guidance for an ideal balance of recreational opportunities throughout the City. This is best achieved by considering a number of factors, such as park service levels, changing demographics, evolving trends in recreation, and future opportunities for expanding the parks system.

Parks Master Plan Schedule

The planning effort for the Parks Master Plan involves four steps:

Learning Existing Conditions:

Existing conditions analysis of the parks, recreation facilities and programs; demographic and population analysis; lifestyle analysis; review of guiding documents; climate action plan opportunities and the launching of the project website
(Fall 2017 to Summer 2018).

Exploring of Needs and Priorities:

Staff and key stakeholder interviews; statistical survey on park needs; online engagement and regional workshops on park service levels; and program needs and priorities
(Fall 2018 to Winter 2019).

Envisioning Long Range Park Planning:

Public workshops to create a vision, goals, and guiding principles for the Parks Master Plan; and Parks and facility improvements recommendations
(Spring 2019 to Fall 2019).

Implementing the Parks Master Plan:

Funding analysis and strategies; short-term and long-term action items to implement the Parks Master Plan; preparation of the first draft of the Parks Master Plan; public outreach on the draft Parks Master Plan, public comment on the draft environmental document; approval process through advisory committees; and adoption by City Council
(Winter 2020 to Fall 2020).

Public Outreach Effort

One of the important steps in the planning process is to understand the public's recreational needs, interests and priorities. Over the three year planning effort, the Parks Master Plan will gather input from residents in communities across the City in different ways, including: regional focus workshops, stakeholder interviews, online activities, statistically valid survey, and social media. The planning process is guided by a broad, citywide outreach and public participation program. The project website was launched in January 2018, with information on the Parks Master Plan purpose and a sign up webpage for project updates and meeting notifications.

The public outreach effort incorporates special considerations to assure all residents can participate. These considerations include the use of simple, clear language to ensure outreach materials are understandable, engaging and emphasize themes such as family and everyday quality of life. All of the meeting facilities will be accessible to all people. In addition, public outreach will be distributed across City Council Districts with additional focused outreach efforts occurring in the areas with higher numbers of limited English speakers, minority populations, and/or low-income populations. Outreach events in communities with a concentration of Spanish speakers a Spanish-speaking facilitator will be present. For communities with limited English proficiency other than Spanish, and for communities with minority populations and/or low-income populations, the project team will partner with community-based organizations for assistance with communication and to encourage attendance at public outreach events.

The City has sent out a statistically valid survey to selected households to achieve a random distribution across City Council Districts. Respondents will have the option of completing a printed, telephone, or online survey. Survey questions will solicit public input on park/program usage and satisfaction, parks and recreation programming needs, the distance residents are willing to travel to visit a park or facility, and the prioritization of actions that the City can take to improve the parks and recreation system. The public at-large will also have the opportunity to participate in a similar questionnaire as part of an online engagement opportunity through the website. The results of the survey will inform the assessment of community needs and priorities for facilities and programs, and highlight priorities and options to guide the visioning phase.

Next Steps

Regional workshops will be held in each of the nine Council Districts with an additional workshop being held Downtown San Diego. Workshops will be scheduled this summer, dates and locations to be determined. The regional workshops will be open house 2-hour sessions where members of the public will be presented an overview of the PMP process, a summary of the existing conditions and interactive topic stations designed to gain input from the community on needs and priorities. Tables with laptops or tablets will also be available enabling participants to complete an online engagement activity in a variety of languages.

Project Information and key meeting dates for the San Diego's Parks Master Plan will be available on the project website: www.CityofSanDiegoParksPlan.com

