

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
COUNCIL POLICY

CURRENT

SUBJECT: PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND INPUT FOR CITY-WIDE PARK
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
POLICY NO.: 600-33
EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 28, 2016

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the Recreation Element of the City’s General Plan is to “preserve, protect, acquire, develop, operate, maintain, and enhance public recreation opportunities and facilities throughout the City for all users.” General Plan Policy RE-A.2 calls for community plans to guide and define park and recreation land use throughout the City. Park development projects (Projects) that implement the General Plan vision are initiated through a variety of mechanisms, including but not limited to community plans, impact fee studies, annual budget, grants, donations, and other sources. These Projects may include design and construction of new park areas and amenities as well as expansion to and replacement of amenities at existing park areas. Projects may be implemented by the City or private entities as part of a new development.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Council Policy is to establish guidelines to assure the public has adequate advance notification and opportunity to participate in the input process of Projects. It is intended that the process be administratively efficient, structurally predictable, and result in timely public input. This Council Policy applies to all entities performing proposed improvements to the City’s park facilities.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. Bulletin: A one-page document that identifies, at a minimum, the Project name and location, proposed scope of work, time and location of a public meeting, goals for that public meeting, Project funding, and Project contact information.
- B. Bulletin Distribution: A process whereby the Project Manager has the following responsibilities to ensure that the public has timely and complete notice of a Project:
 - 1. Develop a Bulletin;
 - 2. Contact staff representative of the appropriate Recreation Council to advise of the Project;

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3. Contact staff representative(s) of appropriate City Council office(s) to seek names of members of the public who have expressed interest in the Project;
4. Provide the Bulletin to the following entities/individuals:
 - a. Staff representative and chairperson of the Recreation Council,
 - b. Appropriate City Council office(s),
 - c. Interested members of the public,
 - d. Staff representative and chair of the recognized Community Planning Group, and
 - e. Property owners who surround the park within a minimum 300-foot radius of the Project site; and
5. Coordinate the creation and placement of a sign or public notice at the Project site that provides information contained in the Bulletin.

C. Director: The Park and Recreation Department Director or his or her designee.

D. General Development Plan (GDP): A conceptual master plan that identifies the activities and amenities to be included within a park. A GDP is the basis for Public Project Assessment and eventual construction documents. Improvements identified within a GDP may be implemented through multiple phases as funding is available.

E. Park and Recreation Board: The advisory board created by City Council pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code Section 26.30(a). For some Projects, other City advisory bodies may make the final recommendation (for example, a Regional Park Task Force as authorized by Joint Exercise of Powers Authority or similar agreement).

F. Project Manager: The City-approved individual who serves as the point of contact for the Project.

G. Public Project Assessment: As provided in Development Services Department Information Bulletin 510, this is an assessment conducted by City staff to review the impacts of a Project, if any, including impacts to historic, cultural, archaeological, and environmental resources.

H. Public Workshop: A gathering of members of the public, usually at a noticed Recreation Council meeting, to discuss the Project. Workshops must be placed on the Recreation Council's agenda and comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act for open meetings.

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- I. Recreation Council: A group of individuals officially recognized by the City who are interested in promoting recreation opportunities by developing and promoting parks within their community. Many of these groups were established in accordance with Council Policy 700-42. For the purposes of this Council Policy, Recreation Councils also include citizens' advisory committees for open space and regional parks (i.e., Mission Trails, Otay Valley, Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve) and advisory committees for resource-based parks (i.e. Mission Bay, Balboa Park, Municipal Golf). In the absence of a Recreation Council in good standing with the City, the recognized Community Planning Group established under Council Policy 600-24, will serve as the Recreation Council. Recreation Councils give advisory recommendations.

POLICY:

- A. Relationship to City-Approved Plans: The Project should be consistent and in conformance with the City's General Plan, applicable community plan(s) and/or master plan(s), and impact fee studies.
- B. Review Process for Projects: The review process for a Project varies depending on the complexity of the Project, including whether a GDP amendment is required. A GDP is required when a new amenity is proposed for a park. Prior to the public input phase, the City will determine the public notice and hearing process based on the Project scope. It is anticipated for budgeting and scheduling purposes that Projects requiring no GDP amendment will have one Recreation Council meeting, Minor Projects requiring a GDP amendment will have two Recreation Council meetings, and Major Projects requiring a GDP amendment or new GDP will have three Recreation Council meetings. Additional meeting(s) beyond those identified in this Council Policy may impact the Project by increasing the Project timeline and reducing the funding available for the Project's construction.
1. Projects Consistent with Existing GDP and No GDP Amendment Required
- a. Projects will be determined by the City to be consistent with an existing GDP based on the following conditions:
- i. A GDP for the park site has already been approved through a previous public process, and

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- ii. One of the following factors is true:
 - a) The GDP includes the Project as a planned amenity, or
 - b) The Project provides amenities that will improve park patron safety and accessibility without conflicting with the GDP, or
 - c) The Project replaces an existing amenity consistent with the GDP that no longer meets current standards or has outlived its useful life.
- iii. These types of Projects may include amenities that were included in the GDP but were not funded or constructed at the time of GDP approval and/or initial park development.
- a. Projects consistent with an existing GDP may include:
 - i. Security lighting
 - ii. Picnic shade structures
 - iii. Accessibility improvements
 - iv. Comfort station improvements and/or expansion
 - v. Improvements related to health and safety
- b. The public notice and hearing process for Projects consistent with an existing GDP involves the following steps:
 - i. Recreation Council Meeting: The Project Manager will request the Project be placed on the agenda for a Recreation Council meeting. At the noticed meeting:
 - a) The Project Manager will present Project scope, schedule, cost, and related relevant information.
 - b) If appropriate to the Project, alternatives may be considered by the Recreation Council.
 - c) Members of the public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the Project.

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- ii. After the Recreation Council meeting, no additional public input is required for the Project to proceed to subsection “C” of this Council Policy for approval.

2. Projects Requiring a GDP Amendment or New GDP

- a. Minor Projects are those that require a GDP amendment, but are minor in nature (Minor Projects).
 - i. Projects will be determined by the City to be Minor Projects based on the following conditions:
 - a) An amended GDP is required, and
 - b) The proposed improvements are minor in nature and do not displace other park uses.
 - ii. Minor Projects may include:
 - a) New comfort stations
 - b) New sports field lighting (where no sports field lighting currently exists)
 - c) Upgraded or expanded tot lots or playgrounds
 - d) Parking lot expansion of less than 25% of existing parking lot
 - e) Turf conversion from natural to synthetic or vice-versa
- b. Major Projects are those that require GDP amendments or the development of a new GDP (Major Projects).
 - i. Projects will be determined by the City to be Major Projects based on the following conditions:
 - a) A new or amended GDP is required to add the proposed improvements, or

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- b) The new improvements are major in nature and/or may displace other park uses.
- ii. Major Projects may include:
 - a) New tot lot or playground
 - b) New park or expansion of an existing park
 - c) New recreation center or expansion of an existing recreation center
 - d) New aquatic complex or expansion of an existing aquatic center
 - e) New special activity park (e.g., skate park, dog off-leash)
 - f) Parking lot expansion greater than 25% of existing parking lot
 - g) New joint-use facilities (i.e. multi-purpose sports fields and jogging tracks on school district property)
- c. The public notice and hearing process for Minor Projects and Major Projects involves the following steps:
 - i. Bulletin Distribution
 - ii. Public Workshop(s): The Project Manager will request a Public Workshop be scheduled and placed on the agenda for a Recreation Council meeting (regular or special meeting).
 - a) The Project Manager conducts the Public Workshop(s) and is responsible for:
 1. Efficiently using the time available during the Public Workshop(s) to maximize the time for public input.
 2. Providing details of the Project, including proposed scope, schedule, cost, and related information.
 3. Discussing steps for Project review and approval.

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4. Compiling a list of members of the public who have expressed interest in the Project. This list will be used to contact interested members of the public with information about subsequent public meetings.
 - b) Based on the information provided by the Project Manager, the Recreation Council and members of the public will be invited to provide input regarding the Project. This input will provide guidance on the community's desires for the Project and will be used to develop conceptual alternatives that incorporate identified priorities within the Project budget.
- iii. Between the initial Public Workshop and the subsequent Recreation Council meeting(s), the Project Manager will gather and review feedback from the Public Workshop and develop conceptual alternatives for the next meeting.
- iv. Recreation Council Meeting(s):
 - a) The Project Manager will request the Project be placed as an "action item" on the agenda for a Recreation Council meeting and present conceptual alternatives for consideration by the Recreation Council.
 - b) Members of the public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed alternatives presented by the Project Manager.
- v. Park and Recreation Board Review:
 - a) Prior to inclusion on the Park and Recreation Board agenda, the Project Manager will route the Project through the Public Project Assessment process, including the appropriate environmental document.

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- b) The Project Manager will prepare a staff report for the Park and Recreation Board in accordance with Park and Recreation Board Policy No. 1011 and the Consultant’s Guide to Park Design and Development. The staff report shall include a copy of the proposed GDP amendment or new GDP and supporting documentation. The Director will review and approve the staff report prior to review by the Park and Recreation Board.

- c) Minor Projects: The Director shall provide each member of the Park and Recreation Board with the staff report and notice of the recommendation made by the Recreation Council with respect to the Minor Project. Within five (5) business days of the date of the notice, any member of the Park and Recreation Board may request the Director place the Minor Project on the agenda for the next Park and Recreation Board meeting for review and discussion. If a member of the Park and Recreation Board has the Minor Project placed on the agenda for discussion, the Park and Recreation Board will consider the Minor Project at the next Park and Recreation Board meeting and take action to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of the Minor Project and any required GDP amendment or adoption of a new GDP. Alternatively, if the five (5) business days have elapsed and no member of the Park and Recreation Board has elected to hear the Minor Project, then the Park and Recreation Board is deemed to have recommended approval of the Minor Project and the Minor Project will proceed to subsection “C” of this Policy.

- d) Major Projects: The Director will cause the Major Project to be included as an “action item” on the agenda for the next available Park and Recreation Board meeting. At that meeting, the Park and Recreation Board will consider the Major Project and take action to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of the Major Project and any required amendment or adoption of a new GDP. Upon receiving a recommendation from the Park and Recreation Board, the Major Project will proceed to subsection “C” of this Policy.

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C. Final Approval of the GDP or Project: As designated by the Mayor, the Director has authority to approve, deny, or modify all GDPs and all Projects based on input from Recreation Councils and the Park and Recreation Board. Upon approval by the Director, a Project may proceed to the next phase of development and subsequent construction. A Project proceeding to the next phase will also proceed through the City's development and construction permitting process, as necessary, which may include review by state and local agencies, including the California Coastal Commission and the City's Historic Resources Board.

The City Council retains the prerogative to waive any policy or requirement herein contained.

HISTORY:

Adopted by Resolution R-298444 - 09/29/2003

Amended by Resolution R-307347 - 04/05/2012

Amended by Resolution R-310202 - 01/28/2016