

May 22, 2020

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Via Email to JOAvila@sandiego.gov

Re: City of San Diego Parks Master Plan Draft

This letter is submitted on behalf of the residents of La Jolla, as represented by the La Jolla Parks and Beaches, Inc. and La Jolla Shores Association, City advisory groups, along with the Bird Rock Community Council and Friends of Coast Walk Trail. The purpose of our collective voices is to comment on the City of San Diego's Draft Parks Master Plan specifically impacting parks and shorelines in the zip code of La Jolla. We appreciate your thought, effort and vision which has gone into this draft document and concur with many of its elements. Parks throughout the City should be accessible, robust and well maintained.

We submit the following key points for your careful consideration and incorporation into the final Plan.

Shoreline Parks: One of the Guiding Principles of the draft Plan is "Iconic," calling for parks to reflect "the unique qualities of their settings and enhance the image of the City..." We applaud this value and trust that this principle will particularly be applied to our unique shoreline parks and rights of way. La Jolla is home to local shoreline parks and outlooks which are best described as "destination" parks. We are concerned that the generic inclusion of all our shoreline parks in the term "Regional Developed Parks" on page 24 especially subjects our "iconic" destination parks to maintenance and development practices which we consider inappropriate.

Ellen Browning Scripps Park, Kellogg Park, Coast Walk Trail and Whale View Point are shoreline parks and rights of way which have become destinations for users from all over the County of San Diego, the United States and indeed, the world. Our city encourages millions of visitors to come to La Jolla to use these iconic parks to walk, swim, explore marine protected areas, picnic, watch seals and sea lions, and get married, to name just some of their recreational benefits. Now among San Diego's most famous parks, these specific shoreline parks and rights of way suffer from overuse, security shortcomings, traffic congestion, and under-maintenance.

We submit destination shoreline parks should have management elements different from those of neighborhood parks used on a daily basis mainly by local residents. These parks should have the following elements of their uniqueness preserved:

1. They should be maintained as natural locations, meaning no additional playground equipment, dog parks, sports fields or other recreational resources, which are otherwise appropriate to local parks. This appears to differ from the draft Plan at Appendix C, page 15 which contemplates inclusion of "facilities found in Community Parks" at Shoreline Parks and Beaches.

2. As recognized in the section on Regional Parks on page 105, maintenance and operational funding should be calibrated to the tourist usage of these parks. Visitors' experiences will become a defining recollection of San Diego parks and beaches. If they are dirty, littered, poorly maintained and dilapidated, that memory will survive. To provide a safe and secure experience for the large numbers of visitors to these parks, rangers or other security presence are important during all operating hours, as noted under Policy OM2 on page 104.
3. Use of these parks should not be corrupted by artistic or other potentially commercial uses which can detract from the natural experience of the parks (as applied to parks generally under Policy A2 on page 88 and the Arts & Culture section on page 95), including avoidance of vendors except in partnership with non-profit and community groups (contra Policy A3 on page 88).

La Jolla's shoreline parks also include numerous lookouts along its coastline, such as Coast Walk Trail and pocket parks like Calumet, La Jolla Hermosa and Lower Hermosa, all considered treasured local resources for surf-watching, sunsets and relaxation. City policy concerning maintenance and trash removal at these areas must be part of park planning in our community. Some of these are maintained while others seem to fall in an administrative blind spot when it comes to City asset responsibility for upkeep and maintenance. We request clear assignment of resource responsibilities between the Parks and Recreation and Transportation and Storm Water Departments with accountability to the local community. This policy and practice clarification would also benefit the Fay Avenue Bike Path.

La Jolla Community Parks and Wayfinding Plan: Although most attention to La Jolla's parks is directed to its iconic shoreline parks, La Jolla is fortunate to also have parks and rights of way which are distinctive amenities for the neighborhoods around them. However, communities like La Jolla Shores, Bird Rock and the Soledad Mountain area lack parks which are local in character and serve the needs of a growing aging-in-place residential population. We would greatly welcome projects by the City to identify new pocket parks, rights of way and canyons which can be improved to create recreational and aesthetic opportunities for our own residents. The voice from local citizens include hiking trails and strolling paths, sites for demonstration and milkweed gardens, shaded seating and opportunities for relaxing and connecting with neighbors. We also urge the development of a Safe Routes to Parks plan for La Jolla and a repurposing of appropriate rights of way to make bicycling and walking safer and more enjoyable. Additionally, we want to ensure that public transportation access to La Jolla's shoreline parks is enhanced upon completion of the Mid-Coast Trolley Extension with connectors to the trolley as well as bus lines.

New 12 Point Standard should be tempered for communities which are home to Developed Regional Parks: Resources allocated to parks in La Jolla should take into account regular use by residents of our community as well as additional use by literally millions of visitors. Any application of the new point system (allocating points for parkland acreage, walking distance to transit stops, interpretive signage, etc.) to La Jolla without an appropriate DEDUCTION for transient/visitor use will deprive all of our parks of significant resources essential to maintaining and protecting them. It is our expectation that the City will provide us with the opportunity to better understand impact of the point standard assessment on La Jolla and our input can be included in the process.

Funding: We acknowledge the role which partnerships with public and private non-profit organizations will necessarily have to play in creating much of the resources needed to make our parks what they can and should be throughout the City. Taxpayer and programmatic funding will never be enough. We suggest that the Plan specifically mention the San Diego Parks Foundation, founded by La Jollans only last year, and dedicated to working with the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department to

develop public and private financial resources in support of San Diego parks, especially in communities of concern. Institutional support from the Mayor and the Planning Department will help bring attention and support to this organization with high potential to support implementation of the Parks Master Plan.

Updated Community Plan: Several ideas in the draft Parks Master Plan are welcome to our community including better transportation corridors between parks, creating bicycle lanes and examining best uses for streets, canyons and other spaces. Since redefining these uses will require a renewed La Jolla Community Plan (which is already dated), we hope the City will initiate an update to enable the La Jolla Community Planning Association to assist us in advancing the Parks Master Plan when adopted.

Community Participation and Feedback: La Jolla has established itself as a community ready, willing and able to support healthy parks and beaches for its residents and visitors alike. We have several non-profit organizations dedicated to improving our parks and public spaces, peopled by highly experienced volunteers keen on participating in local projects. These personal and financial resources could be mobilized to facilitate a number of the items discussed in this letter. We highly recommend the City's Get It Done platform be expanded to include a specific category to report issues in parks, shorelines and canyons, encouraging citizens to provide timely feedback concerning routine upkeep.

We look forward to working with the City to maximize the value of shorelines, canyons, rights of way, green spaces and other recreational amenities of our community.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and direct any questions or concerns to lajollaparksandbeaches@gmail.com

Respectively submitted,

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Janie Emerson, La Jolla Shores Association
Barbara Dunbar, Bird Rock Community Council
Brenda Fake, Friends of Coast Walk Trail

cc: Barbara Bry, City of San Diego Council President Pro Tem
Steven Hadley, Community Outreach Director, Office of Councilmember Barbara Bry
Andrew Field, City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Director