

Balboa Park Committee Meeting – Public Input on Draft RFP for Inspiration Point July 11, 2019

Input from the Completed Comment Cards envelop on each table

HOPES:

Uses

- Use land contour to accentuate inspirational view
- Give the land back to the Kumeyaay.
- Sell to highest bidder with land use plan approved by voters and use money to fix the park.
- Use the land for CEQA mitigation.
- Open parkland is a priority; communal use preferred
- Limited use
- Keep park active for families
- Accommodate current and future uses; make usable, safe, and reasonable cost (rental) for users
- Preserve dog-walking space
- Balboa Park will not become Mission Bay.
- People come to see Balboa Park, its museums, shows, walk, food trucks, art galleries, concerts, and exercise – and a park to just sit.
- Keep as a viewpoint, not a destination.
- People want a lot of greenery.
- Money generators to help support infrastructure
- Balanced development – open space with organizations. Significant well of parking. No problems with hotel, don't know if Inspiration Point is right location.
- Strike a balance between expenses and revenue. More creative ways to generate revenue. Support a portion of TOT for Balboa Park. Support a property tax assessment.
- Develop Inspiration Point into sports fields or other park areas. Positive activation of Inspiration Point is very important. I hope for best in-class park usage of the area. I'm not completely opposed to a structure, if it is arts and culture or parks-related.
- Mobility hub that reduces the need to park cars (showcase automated electric shuttle vehicles)
- Facility that holds new municipal gym, rehearsal spaces, meeting rooms and supporting businesses
- Tunnel under Park Blvd. for shuttle vehicles and pedestrians
- Return parking to the park; grow the park; 14th Street Promenade
- Increase free and open park land
- Open space and beautiful plants. Free California native plant garden.
- Use the space for increased cultural resource especially in partnership with indigenous communities.
- Activate the space; balance potential revenue with return of green space
- Acknowledgement of native cultural history of site
- Mixed use solutions to activate the park
- Beautify the area, refurbish old park buildings, parking structure ok on South Inspiration Point.
- Museums, additional cultural organizations, parking

- Primarily open parkland, parking retained at the lowest area of the area and limited concessions to serve users in that area. No hotel, no large commercial structures, possibly a low-profile restaurant but carefully sited. Some cultural groups might be accommodated in the Admin Building and the old library building.
- Keep it open for public use.
- Passive park land.
- More “child friendly” facilities.
- A balance between revenue and recreation.
- To be used as originally intended cultural or open parkland.
- Revitalize for walking and recreation.
- 80% open space, 10% recreation fields and facilities, 8% parking, 2% restaurants and minor commercial, 0% hotels
- No hotels or commercial use except limited food purveyors.
- Balanced development with a significant parking well.
- Keep as a viewpoint, draw people into the park from downtown
- Besides greenery, let’s do something that attracts people from downtown and better connects the park and downtown.
- Preserve as a viewpoint.
- Event and open space, parking structure
- Activation – things that bring community together such as a soccer field, skatepark, performances, a place where people feel inspired to gather together, picnic areas, etc.
- Implement the legal agreement between the Navy and City when the Navy exchanged building for Inspiration Pt. which was to be returned to open space.
- Leave it alone.
- I hope it will be kept in its natural state. Picnic areas and hiking trails are appropriate uses. Increased shuttle service to that eventually most parking spaces inside the park could be eliminated.
- That it is still part of Balboa Park for years to come.
- Keep it as it is.
- Remains public open space. Lovely public destination with a stunning view.
- To retain the historic preservation and conservation of park landscape, cultural “people’s park” features. That is continues to inspire, enlightenment and accessibility for all, to ponder the beauty of San Diego’s vistas and reflect upon more timeless ideas as prescribed by the park’s founders. It is an international destination – treasure it as it deserves.
- Fix up the sad War Museum, more parking (underground), more trees, outdoor performance venue
- More trees, underground parking, performance venues
- Improve Admin and Library buildings. Improve land for public use – trees and park development. TOT taxes for Balboa Park buildings and park maintenance.
- We are such a huge military community I think we should have a military museum. Maybe I & II World Wars, Korean, and Vietnam, and Iraq – how our military has progressed through the wars and years.
- Beauty, accessibility, financial stability for park
- Open landscaped parkland; underground parking area
- Precise Plan with a small development or a parking structure; preserve for park use
- Rational clean-up of area, convert asphalt to parkland

- Parkland forever with uses for the citizens of San Diego County of San Diego and visitors – uses that complement the objective of the Balboa Park Master Plan.

No commercial

- Keep open park land and no private hotels. Rarely do the private hotel owners or stockholders spend their money in San Diego. Rather, they create minimum wage jobs.
- Maintain open area, not for commercial usage.
- To keep commercialization out and open space a priority.
- Most people seem to be against commercial development at all.
- Clear it of unneeded improvements and the construction junkyard. No commercial activities whatsoever. No retail, no rentals, no restaurants, no hotels. Ever.
- No hotels/commercialization.
- That the park remains free and open, not used for private profit or commercial business.

Buildings

- To see existing building utilized appropriately in keeping with the rest of the park...as an educational, cultural, and artistic attractions amidst parkland.
- Preservation of historical structures
- Utilize existing buildings for museums, cultural activities, and purposes.
- Preservation of historical structures and artifacts.
- Repair buildings that are a safety problem in the park.

Parking

- Low-rise, underground parking structure along the freeway
- Self-financing parking structure
- A parking structure with a green top; a park lid
- Multistory paid parking structure on current lot to generate revenue with green roof and solar.

Gateway/Access

- Freeway lid to enable better access
- A welcoming gateway
- Better access to this orphan parcel
- Welcome Center; Balboa Park history center and gallery
- Majestic entry
- Inspiration Point will do a better job of linking downtown to the park; create a gateway
- Tie Inspiration Point in better with the park.

Broader plan

- Broader plan for whole park, not piecemeal

- This effort might be the inspiration for the development of a strategic plan for the park, not merely a “master plan” for structures and spaces but a strategic plan, including a financial plan which includes all variety of possible resources and revenue generation. The establishment of a strong conservancy model as in Central Park which could create and maintain a dynamic, living strategic and financial plan
- This will stimulate a comprehensive funding plan
- Consider the opinions and voices of young people (especially teens) who will eventually own the park.
- Significant public input into the process
- Hope is that this discussion catalyzes a bigger conversation about the need to develop a comprehensive plan for Balboa Park including a revised master plan, strategy, financial plan, activation plan, mobility plan, etc.

CONCERNS:

Uses

- With more and more building downtown, we need to preserve open space
- Families would have difficulty using public transit to transport all of the family items needed for a daily outing.
- Please keep and prioritize open and recreation uses.
- Please limit area for cars and promote better public transportation.
- Think about surrounding residents that have increasing density and strong need for recreation spaces.
- Selling the property to the highest bidder
- Can't afford maintenance now, much less new structures and spaces
- Traffic noise makes use of the space limiting for open spaces
- Restaurants are plenty in the park so far
- No commercial development and no hotels, it will open up Pandora's box and impact all park organizations.
- A struggle for space with small groups being pushed out
- No commercial development
- No ceding of parkland permanently
- Rehab what is currently existing
- Tourists are unaware of safety issues in the park
- No hotel, no restaurant, no for-profit business in the park.
- Hard time seeing the benefit of destroying green space.
- We are losing free and open park land, and this is an invitation to continue.
- Developers will ruin it forever; promises that may be made will never occur.
- No more water features, we are in a permanent drought.
- Keep Balboa Park a park and not a city shopping center. No hotels – it is not Mission Bay.
- When you open up the park to commercialization then it will further open up opportunities for the rest of the park to be commercialized. The park was made for the people and should stay for the people. It should be kept affordable for everyone.
- Loss of overflow parking for park events. Parking is needed for events. Families come with carloads of stuff for a day outing.
- People are focused on “open space” next to a highway and under flight path – not really viable.

- City needs to restore and fix the park first – and we have the money in the city budget.
- A lot of work was put into installing solar in the parking space; seems like a waste if that's torn out
- Asphalt – too much now.
- No public/partnerships in Balboa Park.
- Flight path is huge issue for hotel or restaurant, limits the desirability.
- Development that is compatible – look and use.
- No commercial except restaurants.
- The hotels on Mission Bay almost never let the public use the beach area next to the hotels. The employees park in the parking lots daily which are provided for recreational users.
- Environmental impact of commercial development, potential for political misappropriation, development could draw attention and funding from badly needed infrastructure rehab, the city's neighborhood master plans are already hugely deficient in park space.
- Maintain ownership of fast disappearing open spaces.
- That this will become a less passive area
- Deviation from Balboa Park Master Plan
- Concerned the park will lose its historical character and will become just another generic tourist trap.
- That are hopes are hijacked by politics and money.
- Top down process, piecemeal approach.
- Any money for park should go to preservation of current buildings.
- Concerned our mayor is just too accommodating to developers and not concerned with what the citizens and natives truly want.
- Big money is intending to destroy the current nature of the park. This must not happen.
- Privileges commercial development over public benefit.
- Commercial development always seems to be the priority in the city.
- The past is the way to look how land gets pulled away for other purposes. This is a park and nothing else should be allowed.
- Flights' noise/constraint
- Access to parcel
- Lot "O"

Revenue

- Please look at parks to be funded via taxes not as revenue generators.
- A way to develop a portion of Inspiration Point as useable public open space and a revenue generating venue – such as paid parking or a restaurant
- How much money will be generated vs. what will be given up or spent on the project
- Idea that parks should be revenue generators
- City incapable of making a valuable decision. Need holistic approach to money revenue.
- Money generated really staying in park vs other city needs.

- Reliable funding is important. This could be accomplished thru designated funding from TOT taxes. Mission Bay lease revenue comes from more than 275 sources. Inspiration Pt could never generate the dollars needed for Balboa Park.
- Commercial development will never offset good fiscal management.

Process

- Park needs to update Master Plan first before updating Inspirational Point.
- A lot of people would be happier if RFP was tied to other things – TOT, Parking structure with a fee.
- This feels like a done deal and this is a dog and pony show and nothing more.
- Seems like this is a done deal. Is there a secret deal already in place? Strategic park-wide plan should be first priority.
- The process as outlined is flawed as the Master Plan is not updated yet.
- Given where we are as a city – this would be in court forever.
- This process is not a public process – it is a reactive process.
- Seems to be little public discussion.
- Majority old Caucasian crowd at this meeting; need more diversity in voices.
- This process comes on the heels of Jacobs stealing public land
- This feels very chaotic, need proper process.
- This has been sprung on the public without any previous public conversation. The RFP has been presented more or less as a done deal. This process is backwards.
- How can we provide close scrutiny of the contractors involved to keep the development of this project from turning into yet another windfall for well-connected millionaires?
- That it will only reinforce the perception that we can't deal with solving big challenges.
- This kind of piecemeal plan is not going to lead to a successful outcome.
- Can we tie the planning of Inspiration Point to a TOT increase and an underground parking structure? Would this enhance or impair acceptance of a plan for this site?
- Using an outdated master plan to forecast the next 20 to 100 years of Balboa Park real estate is irresponsible and would not be recommended by surrounding municipalities who must update their general plans in legal accordance prior to adopting new proposed zoning changes.
- Needs to be on a public ballot.
- The city has a plan that is committed to lowering or eliminating carbon emissions and using alternative energy or green sources. Without this as part of the RFP this this can be an easy lawsuit.
- Legacy of Naval Hospital fight and Plaza de Panama Spur creates undue suspicion

QUESTIONS:

- Why isn't the 1989 Master Plan called the Estrada Plan like the Parson's Plan, Nolan Plan, and Bartholomew Plan are called? Is it some sort of racist (unconscious) comment?
- Where do the funds generated from Inspiration Point go? Do they go directly into the park or into a general fund?
- Is there a way to ensure a portion of the revenue goes directly into the upkeep of the park?

- If we say no to the RFP what happens?
- Is raising the tourism tax viable?
- Where did the proposal come from?
- Where did this RFP originate? With the Mayor?
- Why did this RFP originate?
- Who is “the City” in the presentation?
- Who will evaluate and recommend the proposals?
- What are the site constraints?
- They just put in solar panels in that parking lot, what will happen to those?
- Do other cities commercialize parks? Why is comparison only to Mission Bay Park?
- How is the RFP panel chosen?
- Where will recycling/greenery functions go?
- Where will Parks & Recreation store supplies and process green waste?
- How will new buildings be maintained? Balboa Park is lacking funding for current needs.
- Since when do parks have to generate income?
- Has an extensive study been conducted on parking usage and the impact of the loss of those parking spaces?
- How much revenue could be generated? Show us the financial proforma.
- Why, with so many existing businesses in operation already is revenue so low?
- Why is the Central Mesa Plan unchanged in over two decades?
- Why does there seem to be so little accountability for the funds taken in from users and overseen by the Conservancy?
- What considerations will there be for parking demands, which will likely increase?
- Where will the P&R “boneyard” go?
- Are only City of San Diego voters making decisions and paying costs?
- Why is the Navy not paying for the current location of Balboa Naval Hospital?
- Would a hotel/restaurant generate sufficient money to make a difference?
- How much is the zoo contributing to the overall maintenance of the rest of the park?
- How much is the zoo leased for?
- Could the zoo’s profits cover the rest of park maintenance?
- How much are all the lease holders paying?
- The park needs money, is this the right solution?
- Why isn’t Lot O in RFP?
- Who makes this decision? Politicians or Citizens?

COMMENTS:

- The Taylor Family has contributed to the growth and development of San Diego for more than ninety years. We were and continue to be pioneers of Pacific Beach. However, we have also been fierce protectors of San Diego’s natural beauty. The Earl and Birdie Taylor Library – named for my great grandparents and paid for by my grandparents – is a testament to their love of public, community spaces. My sisters and I now represent the Taylor Legacy, and we urge you to place priority on the protection of Balboa Park’s free, accessible, and public beauty. A Google search for “parks in San Diego” yields five results. A search for “malls in San Diego” yields

forty-three. Even as a commercial property developer, I urge you not to exploit our last remaining green spaces for profit.

- Let's explore other revenue sources.
- The League of Women Voters conducts studies for free – ask them to study Balboa Park leases.
- People in this meeting keep mentioning a 100 year old plan, but if they want to go that far in the past then why not look at the history of occupation on this land as it was occupied by tribes that continue to exist today. Maybe their voice should be represented too.
- The voices represented tonight were all older and white. Please include voices from teens/young voters and indigenous communities.