



REPORT

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

DATE ISSUED: May 7th, 2024

REPORT NO.: 104

ATTENTION: Parks and Recreation Board
Agenda of May 16th, 2024

SUBJECT: University Community Plan Update

SUMMARY

Issue: Should the Parks and Recreation Board recommend to the City Council approval of the update to the University Community Plan

Staff Recommendation: Recommend to the City Council approval of a resolution adopting the University Community Plan, rescinding the Nexus Technology Specific Plan, and amending the community's Local Coastal Program and the General Plan.

Other Recommendations: None

Fiscal Impact: Not Applicable

Water and Energy Conservation Status: Not Applicable

Environmental: [Draft Program Environmental Impact Report](#)

BACKGROUND

The University Community Plan Update (CPU) is a planning effort intended to guide the future growth of housing and infrastructure for the University Community, including a sustainable balance of parks and recreational opportunities, trails, open space conservation, and urban forestry. This five-year planning effort has included extensive public outreach to develop goals and policies, plan for enhanced park infrastructure, identify new recreational facilities, increase connectivity to recreation facilities, and identify potential new sites for parks.

The University Community is in the north-central portion of San Diego, about 10 miles north of Downtown. The University Community is connected to the region via Interstate 5 (I-5), Interstate 805 (I-805), and State Route 52 (SR-52). The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Blue Line Trolley was completed in 2021 which connects the University Community to Downtown San Diego. The University Community's shopping, corporate headquarters, research and development facilities, outdoor recreational amenities, and the University of California San Diego (UC San Diego) attract visitors from across the region.

The University Community Planning Area (Planning Area) encompasses approximately 8,700 acres. It is bounded by Los Peñasquitos Lagoon and the edge of the east-facing slopes of Sorrento Valley on the north; the railroad tracks, Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar and I-805 on the east; SR-52 on the south; and I-5, Gilman Drive, North Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla Farms, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. Neighboring communities include Torrey Pines, Mira Mesa, Clairemont Mesa, and La Jolla. The Planning Area contains two State-controlled properties—the University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego), and Torrey Pines State Reserve—which are not within the City’s land use jurisdiction.

For more background information, see the University Community Plan Update webpage, <https://www.planuniversity.org/>.

DISCUSSION

The University Community Plan was last updated in 1987, and since that time population and job growth have led the University Community to become one of the San Diego region’s major employment centers. In 2021, the extension to the MTS Blue Line Trolley was completed and created six (6) new Trolley Stations that serve the Planning Area. The 1987 Community Plan has been significantly built out, however, and does not have any substantial capacity for additional homes.

Since the Community Plan was last updated, the City is experiencing a growing housing crisis and a changing climate, requiring additional planning to address housing costs, enhance access and use of transit, and provide public space for all to use. A significant amount of the University Community Planning area is located either within a High or Highest Resource Area based upon 2024 California Tax Credit Allocation Committee Opportunity Maps. Increasing opportunities for homes in this area helps to affirmatively further fair housing and aligns with Citywide goals to provide more homes in high and highest resource opportunity areas. Since the adoption of the General Plan in 2008, the City has already updated 15 community plans to address climate change and a housing shortage by allowing for additional homes to be built near high-frequency public transit. The University Community Plan is being updated as part of a Citywide program to update community plans in locations served by high-frequency public transit consistent with the City of Villages strategy in the General Plan.

The overall vision of the draft University Community Plan is centered around five priorities:

- Supporting a Thriving Economy
- Maximizing Transit Investment Success
- Allowing a Variety of New Homes
- Ensuring a Sustainable Future
- Streets Designed for People

The University Community Plan Update calls for adding additional recreation amenities to existing neighborhood parks and creating park spaces integrated within new development. Future parks are envisioned to vary in programming and design, from community gardens to exercise stations, to meet the diverse needs of the University community members. As more homes are built, based on the development activity, location, and needs of the community

members that new facilities would serve, the City will continually work to identify, plan, and deliver more park and recreation facilities as the community grows.

The Community Plan Update proposes to dedicate approximately 169 acres of City-owned properties as open space pursuant to Charter Section 55. Lands that are dedicated cannot be used for any other purposes without a citywide vote. The Nobel Hill and Nobel “bowtie” properties are located just north of Rose Canyon would provide a continuous connection of over 130 acres of dedicated open space through Rose Canyon, connecting existing City-owned and private open space easements. The Roselle Canyon- Campus Point Headland and Roselle Canyon- Towne Centre Drive Headlands properties are adjacent to the Campus Point Open Space and would provide a more extensive continuous open space system under conservation in both public and private ownership.

Stakeholder Input

The University Community Plan Update Subcommittee (CPUS) was formed in January 2019 and has hosted 44 public meetings (in-person and online) to discuss community issues and priorities, future vision and guiding principles, and to review the Community Discussion Draft prior to its release.

An online community survey was undertaken from May 22 through June 29, 2019, which received 1,607 responses. An [Online Survey Report](#) was prepared to summarize the results and includes a detailed [Appendix](#). The survey focused on identifying community priorities and recommendations for mobility, housing, nonresidential development, parks, and public spaces within the Planning Area. The input collected in this survey was also used to help shape the Vision and Guiding Principles of the CPU.

Throughout the Fall of 2021, staff conducted extensive community outreach and engagement in coordination with the launch of the interactive online engagement platform, Choose Your Future! From October 1 to November 8, 2021, this non-scientific online survey was on the University CPU website. This effort aimed to receive feedback from the University Community on proposed land use options within the Focus Areas. Through this engagement process, over 2,600 respondents completed the survey, and an additional 4,500 respondents began the survey but did not complete it.

What are the proposed parks, recreation, and open space vision & strategies?

The CPU envisions a well-connected system of parks, recreational facilities, and open space that provide opportunities for passive and active recreation, social interaction, community gatherings, the enhancement of the public realm, and the protection of sensitive natural resources.

The goal is to provide additional park space and access to recreational amenities where it’s most needed. Acquiring new parkland and establishing new joint use agreements to expand public access to existing facilities will further enhance the park and recreation amenities in University.

To increase value and use, new and existing parks and recreational facilities should be well-connected by a variety of pathways (such as sidewalks, trails, and paseos), bikeways, and transit, which provide inherent recreational value through features such as interpretive

elements or public art, while encouraging users to utilize active transportation. Recreation facilities should be varied in programming and design to provide amenities for all types of users, from community gardens to exercise stations, and should consider public input and the diverse needs of the University community. Additionally, the University community has an abundance of open spaces, canyons, and preserves, such as Rose Canyon Open Space Park and Campus Point Open Space, where the CPU has identified new opportunities to utilize these resources, including scenic overlooks and trailhead pocket parks.

One of the significant components of the CPU is the provision of new greenways and promenades that offer people places to walk/roll, bike, and play while providing connections to regional attractions within the community. The excess rights-of-way of the northern and southern endpoints of Regents Road and within Governor Drive are envisioned to be transformed into new active greenways. Executive Drive will transform into a four-block linear promenade from Regents Road to Towne Centre Drive. The segment on the western edge is envisioned to be more recreation-oriented to complement the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center.

Consistent with the Parks Master Plan, future park needs are addressed using the Recreation Value Points system. The table below lists existing and proposed CPU Recreation Value Points in relation to the current and forecasted population of the University community. The Recreation Value Points Goal represents the total community-wide points that would meet the standard adopted in the Parks Master Plan (100 points per 1,000 residents).

Recreation Value Point Analysis

Community Summary	
Figure # Existing and Planned Parks and Recreation Facilities Matrix	
Statistics - 2020 population	
Total Population:	64,206
Recreation Value Points Goal, 100 points per thousand:	6,420
Current Recreation Value Points:	3,600
2050 Population, Planned Facilities Built	
Projected 2050 population:	129,566
Recreation Value Points Goal, 100 points per thousand:	12,957
Current Recreation Value Points:	3,600
Planned Additional Recreation Value Points:	5,319
Current + Planned Recreation Value Points Total:	8,919

Recreation value emphasizes the activities and experiences that residents can enjoy, rather than solely the acreage of parkland. It measures the inherent benefits of park spaces – the ability for park facilities to support active recreation and exercise; encourage socializing; link people to transit, bike facilities, trails, and active public areas; and invite activity throughout the day. The proposed parks, trails and recreation spaces that are identified in the CPU’s Figures 26 and 27 are planned to maximize the recreation opportunities that will serve the increasing number of community residents.

The proposed supplemental development regulations (SDRs) to be applied within the CPIOZ are intended to incentivize new development within University's urban villages to implement a variety of public spaces such as plazas, promenades, platforms, podiums, and paseos that will serve as focal points for community gatherings, recreation, and events such as farmers markets and festivals. It also leverages adjacency and relationship to nearby natural open spaces and recreational amenities, providing new and accessible connections to the coast, canyons, and trails, and integrate them into developments.

As more homes come online, based on the development activity, location, and needs of the residents that new facilities would serve, the City will continually work to identify, plan, and deliver more park and recreation facilities as the community grows. The approximately 12,957 Recreation Value Points to be implemented through future opportunities would only be needed if all the community plan update housing capacity is built and occupied during the 30-year planning horizon.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Through the extensive public engagement process, the proposed University Community Plan Update expresses a new vision and recommends a land use plan and zoning program for vibrant employment centers, eclectic urban villages, and active neighborhoods for all ages and abilities along with a supportive mobility network, urban design framework, and parks and recreation strategy. The Community Plan Update aims to leverage the geographic centrality of University Community to the region by co-locating high-quality jobs and homes. The Community Plan Update will increase residential and commercial capacity, while improving mobility options for a greater number of people, advancing public spaces, and providing necessary infrastructure to support new residents. The policies in the Community Plan Update highlight the importance of a connected, walkable community with more transit-oriented development, all of which help put the community on a positive trajectory to meet the goals outlined in the City's General Plan and Climate Action Plan.

All Community Plan Update documents and meeting materials are on the University Community Plan Update website: www.PlanUniversity.org.

Respectfully submitted,



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SR/ad

Attachment:

- 1) Draft University Community Plan and Local Coastal Plan Community Update ([Link](#))