

Parks and Recreation Department
Area Committee Meeting
Parks and Recreation Director's Update
January 8, 2025

Appointments: The Department is pleased to announce that **Patrick Hadley** has been selected as the new Deputy Director of Mission Bay/Shoreline Parks Division in the Parks and Recreation Department effective January 18, 2025.

Patrick brings a wealth of experience and expertise that will be instrumental in supporting the Parks and Recreation Department's success. Patrick has over 16 years of experience in various roles and departments throughout the City, including the Business Office, as well as the Environmental Services, Public Utilities, and Transportation Departments. Patrick obtained a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from San Diego State University. Most recently, Patrick has served as the Deputy Director of the Streets Division in the Transportation Department for the past three years.

The Department is grateful for **Mayra Medel** for serving as the Interim Deputy Director of the Mission Bay/Shoreline Parks Division over the past six months. Mayra will return to her role as Senior Planner and continue the good work supporting the Division in that capacity. We are indebted to her for her service and leadership of the Division.

Budget Update: The City continues to grapple with the budget deficit with measures undertaken to address financial concerns in the current year.

- Measure E, which would have raised sales taxes in the City by one cent, has failed. The Department of Finance is assessing options knowing that the Five-Year Financial Outlook suggests a projected \$258.2 million deficit in Fiscal Year 2026.
- On December 24, 2024, Mayor Gloria issued a memorandum outlining immediate actions necessary to address the growing budgetary shortfall within the City, as follows:
 - A strategic hiring freeze that will only allow the City to fill the most mission-critical roles.

- Suspension of non-essential overtime and expenditures like travel and training.
- Reduction of outside contracts for professional and consulting services.
- Evaluating outside leases for opportunities to reduce General Fund expenditures.
- Examining fees and fines to ensure they're adequately covering the cost of services.
- For the Fiscal Year 2026 proposed budget process, the Department has been asked to prepare a 20% budget reduction sheet. This proposal is currently in development and will likely result in significant service level impacts across the park system if implemented.
- The independent Budget Analyst report https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/25-01-iba-review-of-the-mayor-s-fy-2026-2030-five-year-financial-outlook_0.pdf.

City Parks in the News:

- The City has not yet experienced extensive winter rains, and a **red flag warning** was issued during the first full week of January due to strong Santa Ana winds and low humidity. This was covered by several news outlets, including Fox 5: <https://fox5sandiego.com/weather/potentially-strong-santa-ana-winds-prompt-weather-alert-heightened-fire-risk/>.
- The **Farmers Insurance Open** is January 22, 2025, through January 25, 2025, at Torrey Pines Golf Course. The San Diego Union-Tribune (<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2025/01/07/beyond-watching-golf-farmers-insurance-open-to-welcome-all-levels-of-fans-to-la-jolla/>) and other media outlets have begun publicizing the upcoming event, which is one of the most prominent PGA events conducted on a municipal golf course.
- **Golf Digest wrote about Torrey Pines Golf Course** in an article entitled, "You will be shocked by how much money these popular public courses rake in." The article states, "According to the City of San Diego's 2024 Golf Division Business Plan Update—which operates separately from the city's larger budget—the golf enterprise fund has amassed \$39.4 million in reserves. That's on the strength of making \$14.1 million in profit in fiscal year 2024 that

ended in June. The golf unit made \$12.2 million in 2022 and \$14 million in '23." Much of this revenue is planned for the upcoming clubhouse replacement project at Torrey Pines. Additionally, the article states that "in a recent review for Golf Digest of its search analytics for the year, Google put it behind only Augusta National Golf Club." This was also reported by the Union-Tribune. Links:

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2024/12/10/san-diegos-public-golf-courses-are-raking-in-millions-in-profits-and-helping-fund-some-major-upgrades/> and <https://www.golfdigest.com/story/torrey-pines-municipal-golf-courses-city-san-diego-revenues-profits-green-fees>.

- The Mission Bay Park Committee has written a letter supporting the **end of nightly SeaWorld fireworks in Mission Bay**. A news article further indicates that Council President Joe LaCava also opposes continued nightly SeaWorld firework shows but would support a smaller number of shows or alternate types of shows (such as drones). The Voice of San Diego covered this: <https://voiceofsandiego.org/2025/01/07/new-san-diego-council-president-wants-to-end-seaworld-fireworks/>.
- A general development plan effort is underway at **South Shores in Mission Bay Park**. The GDP will eventually come to the Parks and Recreation Board but is currently under review by the Mission Bay Park Committee. Some concepts may result in expanded recreational use and development, so long as any development is consistent with the landfill purposes. This was covered by the San Diego Union-Tribune: <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2025/01/05/can-a-long-toxic-shoreline-solve-mission-bays-recreation-needs-san-diego-readies-rival-visions-for-south-shores/>.
- As a public safety measure, the City is installing **new barriers on Sunset Cliffs** between Adair and Osprey streets due to new cracks found in the bluff area. NBC7 and KPBS covered this in late December 2024: <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/workers-erecting-barricade-on-section-of-sunset-cliffs-after-cracks-worsen/3711210/> and <https://www.kpbs.org/news/environment/2024/12/31/san-diego-will-install-new-barriers-on-sunset-cliffs>.
- On the evening of Christmas Day (December 25, 2024), someone drove in circles through **Pioneer Park** and left "donuts" in the turf of the park. Staff

had to clean up the muddy mess left behind. This was covered by NBC7: <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/driver-doing-donuts-in-mission-hills-leaves-muddy-mess-behind-at-pioneer-park/3709575/>.

- During the king tides of late December 2024, the **Ocean Beach Pier** lost another piling. The pier has been closed to the public since 2023 and is not slated for repair. A replacement pier continues to be designed, but construction funds have not been identified. NBC7



covered this: <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/ob-pier-takes-another-pounding-from-high-surf-loses-another-piling/3709421/>.

- **Crystal Pier** is currently under repair with construction activity visible from the end of Garnet Avenue. Eight pilings are being replaced, with a goal to complete this work in January 2025. Another phase is planned to fix the substructure later this year so that the pier can reopen to the public. Link: <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/pacific-beach-crystal-pier-repairs/3693246/>.
- Dozens of winter carnivals, breakfasts with Santa, cookie decorating, toy distribution, and much more brought us through the month of December. Many great events were attended by thousands of San Diegans across the City. A major collaboration that brought thousands of people to Teralta Park was with the **City Heights CDC** for a **winter wonderland** complete with snow. It was held on December 14, 2024, and featured not only Santa but also entertainment and food. City Heights staff helped put on this very successful event. There San Diego covered this event: <https://theresandiego.com/event/annual-city-heights-cdc-winter-extravaganza/>. **December Nights** was also very successful at Balboa Park, with hundreds of thousands of people visiting the park and experiencing the newly renovated Botanical Building. Links: <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2024/12/02/december-nights-2024-expect-a-ferris-wheel-and-the-newly-renovated-botanical-building/> and <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/in-your-neighborhood/so-youre-going-to-december-nights-where-do-you-and-150000-others-park/3690468/>. Many

park staff were involved in putting on these and so many more successful winter and holiday themed events.

City Auditor Update:

The Office of the City Auditor issued two reports related to the park system:

- **Performance Audit of the Mission Bay and San Diego Regional Parks Improvement Funds, Fiscal Year 2023 (Report #OCA-25-04):**
<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/performance-audit-of-the-mission-bay-and-san-diego-regional-parks-improvement-funds-fy2023.pdf>: This is an annual audit of Mission Bay lease revenues and improvement fund expenditures, and this year there were no recommendations for improved procedures. This audit report will be presented to the Regional Parks Improvement Fund Oversight Committee in early 2025 and to the Mission Bay Improvement Fund Oversight Committee either in December 2024 or early 2025.
- **Hotline Report of Boat Storage Permits (Report #OCA-25-05):**
<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/hotline-report-of-boat-storage-permits.pdf>: A confidential complaint was received that the boat rack storage program needs procedural improvements, with ten recommendations:
 - Implementing reconciliation procedures to ensure all available permits are offered for sale.
 - Transitioning to online registration software.
 - Revising the permitting process to mitigate current problems of extensive waitlists and permits being renewed in perpetuity.
 - Basing permit fees on benchmarking of what other jurisdictions charge.
 - Considering more efficient storage options.
 - Considering charging more for catamarans or limiting the number of permits available for catamarans.
 - Considering replacing damaged racks and/or adding one or more racks.
 - Identifying racks that need repairs and prioritizing repairs.

- Developing written policies and procedures for compliance activities.
- Updating and posting current boat storage applications and permit “Specifications, Rules, and Regulations” sheets online, and ensuring consistency with Department of Motor Vehicles guidance.

This was presented to the Mission Bay Improvement Fund Oversight Committee on January 7, 2025. A summary of findings is available at <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/highlights-hotline-report-of-boat-storage-permits.pdf>.

Grand Openings/Groundbreakings/Events:

- Cañon Street Pocket Park opened to the public on November 27, 2024.
- Olive Street Park and the AIDS Memorial opened to the public on World AIDS Day, December 1, 2024.
- Balboa Park Botanical Building opened to the public on the first day of December Nights, on December 6, 2024.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is coming on Saturday, January 25, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. at Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Park and Recreation Center. All are invited to attend.

Upcoming P&R Board Agenda Items:

- Brush Management Overview – January
- Council Policy 700-42 Community Recreation Group Reform – January
- Joint Use Update – January
- Chollas Creek Flood Mitigation Modifications – February
- Parks Master Plan Update – February or March
- Mid-City Communities Plan Update – To Be Advised

Parks and Recreation Department

Area Committee Meeting

Parks and Recreation Staff Report

January 8, 2025

Community Parks I – Reported by Jerry Abbott (District Manager)

Completed Park Projects:

The Community Parks I division completed the following park improvement projects with grant openings held at the end of 2024.

- Cañon Street Pocket Park opened to the public on November 27, 2024
- Spreckels Elementary Joint Use opened to the public in December 2024.

Park Projects in Progress:

The Community Parks I division has various park projects in progress for 2025 including:

- Carmel Valley synthetic turf project is slated to be complete in winter or early spring 2025
- Ocean Air Comfort station slated to open in Spring 2025
- Carmel Valley area comfort stations are progress
- Rancho Bernardo Lawn Bowl conversion is in progress and will possibly open in Spring
- Mira Mesa Phase 2 is in progress which includes a new pool, skate plaza, updated lighting, and other various upgrades around the park. Recreation center is currently closed, staff has been reassigned to Lopez and Hilltop
- Salk Elementary Joint Use is projected to be completed in Summer or fall 2025
- East Village Green is projected to be completed in Fall or Winter of 2025

Promotions:

- Jaime Diez was promoted to the Maintenance District Manager, working side by side with Anna Sonnenburg for all maintenance related issues in Districts 40 and 44 (Coastal area – Pacific Beach and La Jolla, University City,

Clairemont, Mira Mesa, Rancho Bernardo, Hilltop, Pacific Highland Ranch, Carmel Valley and Ocean Air)

- Area Manager positions were all filled except for one remaining vacancy in the UC area.
- Center Director interviews have been completed. Offers are currently pending review and approval.
- Assistant Center Director interviews have been conducted. Some offers were made but are pending review and approval.

Community Parks II - Reported by Nicole McNeil (Assistant Deputy Director)

Maintenance Updates:

- Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) and Clairemont Pool Rehabilitation projects will begin in the coming weeks.
 - The scope of the MLK Jr Pool project includes comprehensive upgrades and improvements to the plumbing and pool boiler system, replacement of the pool deck and drainage system, and renovations to the building's exterior and interior.
 - At Clairemont Pool, the scope of the project includes repairs and improvements to the pool deck, pool plaster, and accessibility features, including upgrades to tiles and ramps. These projects are funded by State grant funding.
- We've been experiencing some issues with the pool boilers at several sites throughout the City that General Services Department staff are working to get resolved. Unfortunately, City Heights Pool is currently closed due to boiler repairs. ETA for reopening the pool is within the next month.

Event Updates:

- The next Pool Manager and Pool Guard Hiring Event scheduled for this Saturday, Jan 11th. For those interested in working for Aquatics, applications are open and hiring fairs will continue to be hosted on a monthly basis preparation for the summer season.

- Polar Bear Plunge/Sunbear Splash at Swanson-Standley Aquatic Complex is this Saturday, Jan 11th. 12:30-3:30 p.m. A snack and warm drink will be provided. Pool admission fees apply.
- The annual Martin Luther King Jr. Park Festival will be held on January 25th from 11am to 4pm. This is a free family event with musical entertainment, arts and crafts, face painting, food and vendor booths, wellness checks by Kaiser Permanente, and more.
- SD Lunar New Year Festival at City Heights Urban Village will be hosted Jan. 24-26. The event includes performances, arts and cultural exhibitions, lion and dragon dances, carnival games and food.
- The Montgomery Waller Gym Grand re-opening was held on Monday January 6th. The gym underwent extensive renovations, including roof repairs, fresh paint, new flooring, updated padding, and the installation of two new scoreboards.
- Gompers dog off leash area project has been completed. The park is now open to the community. The scheduling of a grand opening event is currently in the works.

Park Incident:

- An incident occurred overnight at the Dennis V. Allen Comfort Station on December 2nd. The comfort station sustained extensive fire damage, likely caused by arson. The comfort station was immediately closed to maintain safety and fenced off. We have portable restrooms and handwashing stations on site in the interim, and we are currently working with the Risk Management and Facilities Department on next steps.

Balboa Park – Reported by Anthony Harrington (District Manager)

Event Updates:

- December Nights was held in Balboa Park the first week of December with an estimated 300,00 people in attendance.

- Balboa Park Botanical Building opened to the public on the first day of December Nights, on December 6, 2024 with an estimated 20,000 attendees for the grand opening of the Botanical Building.

Maintenance Updates:

- Both Municipal Gym and Balboa Park Activity Center finished a court resurfacing project and reopened on Jan. 2nd.

Operational Updates:

- New hours of operation on Fridays at Balboa Park Activity Center. Hours changed from 11:00am-7:00pm to 12:00pm-8:00pm to meet the needs of the community and feedback from attendees.
- Municipal Gym is scheduled to begin basketball practice and league play. There are 5 teams representing Municipal Gym this season.

Stay Connected:

To receive communication emails from the Parks and Recreation on future Area Committee meetings, please sign up for Constant Contact by clicking the link and opting in to receive email communications: [Sign up for Constant Contact](#)

Visit our Event Calendar online to see what is happening around the city by going: <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/event-calendar>

Follow Parks and Recreation Department on Instagram to stay up-to-date on the programs, activities, and events the department is offering:

<https://www.instagram.com/sdparksandrec/#>