

**City of San Diego  
Balboa Park Prioritization Framework**

February 28, 2025



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## 1 Overview & Purpose of Project

As one of the oldest park sites in the United States, Balboa Park in the City of San Diego is a 1,200-acre historic urban cultural park on the traditional land of the Kumeyaay Nation. Not only an open space with natural vegetation, gardens, and walking and bike paths, Balboa Park is also home to the world-famous San Diego Zoo and numerous museums and performing arts venues. The Park also provides recreational facilities, gift shops, and restaurants for visitors to enjoy. A place of historical significance that has hosted international expositions, a portion of the Park was declared as a National Historic Landmark and National Historic Landmark District. The State of California designated this area as a California Cultural District in 2017, given the repurposing of historic venues for use by arts and cultural organizations. Known as Central Mesa, this District within the Park hosts a variety of organizations dedicated to arts, culture, and science, and is home to artists, historic buildings, and gardens, providing unmatched experiences for visitors in the region.

In 2012, Balboa Park completed the most recent amendments to its 1989 Master Plan; over time, the City and Park stakeholders have been presented with a variety of opportunities through a number of studies that have recommended ways in which to secure a sustainable future for the Park. These have included the *Central Mesa Precise Plan*, *East Mesa Precise Plan*, *The Soul of San Diego: Keeping Balboa Park Magnificent in Its Second Century* report, and others ranging from facilities condition assessments to governance, funding, and management reports to cultural- and land-use plans. The City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department thus engaged AEA Consulting in July 2023 to develop a prioritization framework and associated process by which the City can prioritize investment in capital improvement projects and enhance the visitor experience in Balboa Park. As part of this work, the City also requested a review of the current design review and approval process, and recommendations for how it might be updated to improve outcomes. The framework is highlighted as a step within this overall process

AEA's work to create the prioritization framework discussed in this document included five public engagement sessions; four meetings with the Balboa Park Committee; 63 individual stakeholder conversations with not-for-profits, city officials, and other key community members; two surveys and a website for public comments; and a review of existing facilities and park conditions as well as the previously mentioned reports. The process resulted in the creation of a prioritization framework with 14 criteria against which to holistically score an initially identified list of 61 capital projects in Balboa Park.

Finally, it is important to note that the list of capital projects in this report is a starting point, based on Balboa Park's situation at the time of this project (July 2023 to February 2025). The list should be considered a living document that evolves as new projects emerge, as the status of some change to become projects in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and others are completed.



## 2 Prioritization Framework

The City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department's Balboa Park Prioritization Framework is the department's pathway to plan and prioritize projects in the Park. The projects evaluated using this framework will be capital improvement projects, which are defined as the addition of a permanent structure, structural change, or the significant restoration of the City's assets that will either enhance the asset's overall value, prolong its useful life, or adapt it to new uses. Regular and routine maintenance projects or services will not be considered for this framework.

Below is the list of prioritization criteria that projects will be scored on. Each prioritization criterion has scoring weights and an associated point scale. Weights range from 1 to 8, with 8 being the highest weight (most important to the scoring outcome). Each project will be given a score of 1-3 on each criterion, based on its alignment to the criterion and the answers to the questions pertaining to each.

**Projects that pose a health / safety / legal risk may supersede all projects regardless of their score against the criteria below.**

### Prioritization Criteria

The questions associated with each criterion are meant to be a guide for the user of the framework to understand how to score the project against each criterion. (Criteria are listed in order of their weight, from highest to lowest.<sup>1</sup>)

- **Capital Maintenance Need:** Is this project on the deferred maintenance backlog? Where does the subject facility or area rank in the facility condition index?
- **Equity and Accessibility:** Does this project prioritize access and affordability, either for structurally excluded communities or those with disabilities?
- **Historical, Cultural and Aesthetic Significance:** Does this project support the Park's designation as a National Historic Landmark District or protect, maintain, or create beauty and awe?
- **Visitor Experience A:** Does it improve the broader visitor experience? Does it enhance recreational and social activity?
- **Visitor Experience B:** Does it address mobility issues?
- **Visitor Experience C:** Does this project increase the number of visitors for active or passive use?

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<sup>1</sup> The weighting for the Visitor Experience A / B / C criteria are added together to place these criteria in order on the list.



- **Community Engagement:** Has the public been engaged? What is the extent of public support for this project?
- **Alignment to City Priorities:** Does the project align with other City policies and plans, including (for example) Build Better SD, the Climate Action Plan, Mobility Plans, and Parks Master Plans?
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Does this project provide opportunities for enhanced environmental resiliency?
- **Co-Benefit and Partnership:** Can it be bundled with other projects or initiatives either within the Park or in the surrounding area? Does it lead to possible partnerships?
- **Feasibility:** Is project completion needed before another project can be started?
- **Innovation:** Does this project create the opportunity for something new and distinctive?
- **Economic Impact:** Does this project generate additional revenue or decrease operational expenses, either for the City or for the not-for-profit organizations operating within the Park?
- **Funding Plan:** Is there an appropriate funding plan to complete the project? Does this include a plan for ongoing maintenance or service requirements?

## Weighting

Each criterion received a weight, which was informed by input provided during the community engagement sessions.<sup>2</sup> In each of the sessions, attendees were asked to give one point to their top three criteria. Once these results were aggregated, AEA evaluated whether the weighing for each aligned with what we know about Balboa Park and the feedback we heard from stakeholders across the City.

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<sup>2</sup> More detail about this process is in Section 5 of this report.



Based on this analysis, the criteria have the following weighting in the Prioritization Framework:

Criteria	Weight	Maximum	
		Score	% of Total
Capital Maintenance Need	8	24	19%
Equity and Accessibility	6	18	14%
Historical, Cultural, and Aesthetic Significance	6	18	14%
Visitor Experience A	2	6	5%
Visitor Experience B	2	6	5%
Visitor Experience C	1	3	2%
Total Visitor Experience	5	15	12%
Community Engagement	4	12	9%
Alignment to City Priorities	3	9	7%
Environmental Sustainability	3	9	7%
Co-Benefit and Partnership	2	6	5%
Feasibility	2	6	5%
Innovation	2	6	5%
Economic Impact	1	3	2%
Funding Plan	1	3	2%
<b>Total (14 categories)</b>		<b>129</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Scoring

To make the prioritization framework simple yet effective, we created a 3-point scale for each criterion help users score each project. Scoring ranges from 3 being projects that are most aligned with the criterion and the questions being asked, 2 represents moderate alignment; 1 represents a minimal alignment; and projects score 0 if they have no alignment with or are misaligned to the criterion. See an example below:

Criteria	Point Scale (3 = High / 2 = Moderate / 1 = Low / 0 = None)			
	3	2	1	0
<b>Historical, Cultural and Aesthetic Significance:</b> Does this project support the Park's designation as a National Historic Landmark District or protect, maintain, or create beauty and awe?	Clearly preserves / enhances historical or cultural significance, enhances natural beauty of an area, or creates a new opportunity for awe	The project would make moderate preservation / enhancements of historical or cultural significance, or enhancement of natural beauty of an area	The project would make minimal preservation / enhancements of historical or cultural significance, or enhancement of natural beauty of an area	The project does not preserve / enhance historical or cultural significance, enhance natural beauty of an area, or create a new opportunity for awe – or has a negative impact on these

So, for example, if a project scored 3 points in the category of Capital Maintenance Need (with a weight of 8), it would receive 24 points for that criterion as scores are calculated. Taking into account the weight of each criteria and the maximum number of points that can be scored in each, the maximum total score a project can receive is 129. Projects with the highest total scores across the framework would be prioritized; in case of ties, the highest score on the most highly weighted criteria would be elevated in the resulting prioritization list.



## Framework

Note the framework below is also provided to the City separately in Excel for use in the ongoing prioritization process.

Criteria	Example	Weight of the Criteria	Point Scale (3 = High / 2 = Moderate / 1 = Low / 0 = None)				Maximum Score	Project Score	Project Score %
			3	2	1	0			
<b>Capital Maintenance Need:</b> Is this project on the deferred maintenance backlog? Where does the subject facility or area rank in the facility condition index?	Roof replacement, HVAC system replacements, etc.	8	Was benchmarked by the 2016 facilities assessment <sup>1</sup> and/or subject area scores poor in the facility condition index	Is on the deferred maintenance list, but added since the 2016 assessment <sup>1</sup> and/or subject area scores fair in the facility condition index	Project and/or subject area scores relatively well in the facility condition index	Is a new project	24	0	0%
<b>Equity and Accessibility:</b> Does this project prioritize access and affordability, either for structurally excluded communities or those with disabilities?	Improvements to facilities leased by smaller budget orgs, permittee facilities	6	Clearly addresses long-standing inequities of people who live in communities of concern and other marginalized populations	Moderate ability to address long-standing inequities of people who live in communities of concern and other marginalized populations	Minimal / limited ability to address long-standing inequities of people who live in communities of concern and other marginalized populations	Does not address address long-standing inequities, or provides a negative impact on those communities	18	0	0%
<b>Historical, Cultural and Aesthetic Significance:</b> Does this project support the Park's designation as a National Historic Landmark District or protect, maintain, or create beauty and awe?	Restoration projects for historical buildings and cultural institutions, new landscaping, or new projects such as a sky wheel	6	Clearly preserves / enhances historical or cultural significance, enhances natural beauty of an area, or creates a new opportunity for awe	The project would make moderate preservation / enhancements of historical or cultural significance, or enhancement of natural beauty of an area	The project would make minimal preservation / enhancements of historical or cultural significance, or enhancement of natural beauty of an area	The project does not preserve / enhance historical or cultural significance, enhance natural beauty of an area, or create a new opportunity for awe – or has a negative impact on these	18	0	0%
<b>Visitor Experience A:</b> Does it improve the broader visitor experience? Does it enhance recreational and social activity?	Plaza improvements, installation of air conditioning in older facilities, new exhibition space that could be rented	2	Provides significant visitor experience improvement	Provides moderate visitor experience improvement	Provides minimal visitor experience improvement	Provides no visitor experience improvement	6	0	0%
<b>Visitor Experience B:</b> Does it address mobility issues?	Increased parking, bike lanes etc.	2	Provides significant mobility improvements within the park	Resolves some mobility issues within the park	Provides minimal mobility improvements within the park	Provides no mobility improvements within the park	6	0	0%
<b>Visitor Experience C:</b> Does this project increase the number of visitors for active or passive use?	New playground, dog park etc.	1	High likelihood of increased park usage	Moderate likelihood of increased park usage	Unlikely increased park usage	Would be likely to decrease park usage	3	0	0%
<b>Community Engagement:</b> Has the public been engaged? What is the extent of public support for this project?		4	The public has expressed interest in this project through community engagement, surveys, or other forms of public input	The public has been consulted on this project but has not identified it as a top priority	The public only been minimally consulted on this project (e.g. only 1 meeting, etc.)	The public has not been consulted, or has been consulted and has a negative view of the project in aggregate	12	0	0%
<b>Alignment to City Priorities:</b> Does the project align with other City policies and plans, including (for example) Build Better SD, the Climate Action Plan, Mobility Plans, and Parks Master Plans?	Green infrastructure such as bike lanes & racks, conversation of gas HVAC systems	3	Connects to more than two City projects, plans, or initiatives	Connects to two City projects, plans, or initiatives	Connects to one other City project, plan, or initiative	Does not connect to or support any other City projects, plans, or initiative	9	0	0%
<b>Environmental Sustainability:</b> Does this project provide opportunities for enhanced environmental resiliency?	Installation of solar panels on roofs, EV stations	3	Significant resiliency benefits	Moderate resiliency benefits	Minimal resiliency benefits	No resiliency benefit	9	0	0%
<b>Co-Benefit and Partnership:</b> Can it be bundled with other projects or initiatives either within the Park or in the surrounding area? Does it lead to possible partnerships?	Ties into Experience Plan, Forever Balboa Park Strategic Plan, or planned leaseholder improvements.	2	There is a known project or initiative that this project will connect with or amplify	There is the reasonable possibility of a project or initiative that this project will connect with or amplify	There is the minimal possibility of a project or initiative that this project will connect with or amplify	This project does not connect with or amplify any other project	6	0	0%
<b>Feasibility:</b> Is project completion needed before another project can be started?	A city-owned building requires structural improvements such as replacing the roof, and it also needs a repainting of the façade. The replacement of the roof will need to take place before the painting.	2	The project does not depend on another project or initiative to be started	Another project or initiative needs to be partially completed before starting this project	Another project or initiative needs to be significantly completed before starting this project	The project depends on completion of another project or initiative to be started	6	0	0%
<b>Innovation:</b> Does this project create the opportunity for something new and distinctive?	A new recreation center or cultural center.	2	Major project / initiative that creates distinctly new opportunities for park usage	Smaller project / initiative that creates distinctly new opportunities for park usage	Smaller project / initiative that creates a new opportunity, but not distinctive	Not new or distinctive	6	0	0%
<b>Economic Impact:</b> Does this project generate additional revenue or decrease operational expenses, either for the City or for the not-for-profit organizations operating within the Park?	Paid parking in Central Mesa, increased food options	1	There is clear evidence that this project will generate revenue or decrease operational expenses	There is some evidence that this project will generate revenue or decrease operational expenses	There is some evidence that this project will generate revenue or decrease operational expenses, but those gains will be minimally impactful	Will not generate revenue or decrease operational expenses	3	0	0%
<b>Funding Plans:</b> Is there an appropriate funding plan to complete the project? Does this include a plan for ongoing maintenance or service requirements?		1	Funding plan in place	Funding plan in place, but has some contingencies	Funding plan in place, but has significant contingencies	No funding plan	3	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>							129	0	0%

\* Or more recent assessment, if FCAs are updated in the future.



## Using the Framework

The Balboa Park Prioritization Framework is designed to guide the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department in evaluating and prioritizing capital improvement projects within the Park on an ongoing basis. **We recommend that projects are compiled and scored on a regular basis, at least once per year.** The date of this work should be made known to Park stakeholders in advance; this will allow them to advise the City of significant changes to previously scored projects or potentially submit new projects for consideration. We recommend that one individual with a strong understanding of the park's context and the capital project process initially score the projects using the prioritization framework, followed by review and confirmation of the scores by a Review Committee.

### Step 1: Identify New Projects and Confirm Project Eligibility

The list of projects provided as part of this work is a starting point for the City to consider within the prioritization framework. Unless a project poses a health, safety, or legal risk and is immediately prioritized, new projects should be considered for addition to the list at least on a yearly basis. New projects can be identified by City staff or submitted / proposed by other Park stakeholders.

Note that in order to use the framework to evaluate a project, the project must qualify as a *capital improvement project* – meaning modifying existing structures, adding permanent structures, restoring infrastructure to extend its lifespan or solve for future safety concerns, enhance its value, or adapt it for new uses that serve the City and the community. It is important to note that these projects would need to pertain to assets that belong to the City and fall under the responsibility of the City (i.e. not the responsibility of a leaseholder, etc.). As discussed in the following sections, there are many items that, while they are capital projects, do not fall within this category, and others that fall under the category of maintenance projects or services.

### Step 2: Score Each Project Using the Prioritization Criteria

Again, on a regular basis, each project will be evaluated (or re-evaluated) using a set of weighted criteria (see above), ranked in order of importance. The evaluation considers factors such as capital maintenance needs, equity and accessibility, visitor experience, community engagement, feasibility, and alignment with City priorities among others. Each criterion includes a set of guiding questions to help assess how well the project aligns with the criterion's objectives.

Projects are scored using a 3-point scale for each criterion:

- 3 points – Strong alignment with the criterion
- 2 points – Moderate alignment
- 1 point – Minimal alignment





- 0 points – No (or negative) alignment

Each criterion has been assigned a weight, reflecting its relative importance, based on community feedback and stakeholder engagement. (A sample scoring of ten projects can be found in section 5.)

The final score is determined by summing up the weighted scores across all criteria. Projects with the highest total scores would receive prioritization in funding and implementation. In the case of a tie between projects, the evaluator should look at the criterion with the highest weight and give priority to the project that scored highest for that criterion. If they continue to be tied, the next highest weighted criterion would be compared.

### **Step 3: Compare and Prioritize Projects**

Once all eligible projects have been scored, the result should be reviewed by a Review Committee to ensure alignment with funding availability and/or other opportunities to advance prioritized projects. Prioritized projects will be pursued as funding is available, though their elevation of the list may suggest opportunities to alternate (e.g. private) funding sources.



### 3 Initial List of Capital Projects for Prioritization

#### Process

Developing a targeted list of capital projects for prioritization required AEA first to define the universe of proposed projects and subsequently to engage in a multi-step vetting process to review and classify each project. The initial stage of this process entailed a comprehensive review of the many plans, proposals, and RFPs that the City and the community have developed for Balboa Park over the last several decades. These include:

- Central Mesa Precise Plan (1992)
- East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)
- Inspiration Point Precise Plan (1998, unadopted)
- Balboa Park Facilities Condition Assessments (2014-2016)
- 2018 Unfunded Park Improvements (2018)
- Friends of Balboa Park Balboa Park Parking and Circulation Plan (2020)
- Committee of 100 Strategic Plan (2021)
- Balboa Park Cultural Partnership Cultural Experience Plan RFP (2021)
- City of San Diego Climate Action Plan (2022)
- West Mesa Project Priorities, from Bankers Hill Community Group (2023)

This review was supplemented by consultations with and other input from a broad cross-section of community members and groups, advocates, not-for-profits, city officials, and agency representatives.

After this initial pass to define the universe of prospective projects, the unfiltered list included over 500 items. At multiple points between March 2024 and December 2024, AEA met Parks and Recreation staff, including Charlie Daniels, Stephanie Green, and Brice Ciabatti, to review the list. The objective of the meetings was to obtain more clarity on scope, to determine what projects had already been placed in the Capital Improvements Program (“CIP”), and to focus in on the projects most likely to need capital resources in the near-term. The AEA team subsequently coordinated several additional meetings with representatives from other City agencies, including Planning, General Services, and DOT, to provide additional feedback on the list.

Based on these conversations, along with visual inspections of facilities, AEA classified the remaining projects as follows:

- **Active CIPs:** A capital project currently funded (and sometimes in construction)
- **Completed Projects:** Closed-out CIPs
- **General:** General planning items that do not translate into a specific capital project



- **Improvements:** Potential new CIPs or projects, but small enough that they might be Maintenance projects
- **Maintenance/Operations:** Staff-level items that do not require a CIP
- **New CIPs:** Plan-designated projects that require CIP designation and capital funding allocations
- **Non-Profit Partner Projects:** Projects that typically do not require a CIP and are wholly or partially funded by non-profit partners
- **Out-of-Date:** Projects that no longer reflect existing conditions
- **Other Agency Projects:** Potential CIP projects that fall under the jurisdiction of another City or State Agency
- **Plan Amendments:** Projects that have not been ratified under any existing plans and would therefore require a plan amendment before they could be added to the CIP list.
- **Redundant:** Items that came up multiple times in different plans
- **Special Use Permits:** Projects that would require a Special Use Permit
- **Tenant Responsibility:** Projects that require tenants to cover the costs of capital improvements

Four of these categories became the basis for the final project prioritization list:

**Improvements, New CIPs, Non-Profit Partner Projects, and Other Agency Projects.**

While not every project on the final list necessarily requires a CIP (particularly those with not-for-profit sponsors), the items represent a current (as of December 2024), concise, specific subset of projects that will allow the City to apply prioritization criteria efficiently during its initial pass.

Additional discussions with City staff led to the development of two subsidiary lists to supplement the CIP prioritization list. The first of these, called “Non-CIP Priority Items,” lists approximately 45 items that do not fall into the CIP category but still reflect active priorities within the community. These include a large number of proposals for the West Mesa that will require a more formal adoption through a new planning process such as a Precise Plan; several Park-wide environmental goals articulated in the Climate Action Plan; and a variety of new landscaping and trails-related projects that are likely staff-level initiatives rather than CIPs. The second list, which was provided to the City but not included in this report, is a list of 100+ maintenance items. These include detailed items such as light fixtures, door hardware, or floor tile repairs, as well as a variety of landscape improvements.

It should be noted that Facilities Condition Assessment reports that were commissioned by the City in 2014-2016 included 118 facilities within Balboa Park. The purpose of the assessment was to establish a Plant Replacement Value for each of these buildings and to



assign a “Facilities Condition Index” to each site in order to establish the extent of work needed. This report did not create a separate mechanism for prioritizing capital work but instead documented the extent of the need – identifying \$285 million or more of projects across the Park.<sup>3</sup> Many of the facilities listed in the FCA report appear in the CIP Prioritization List, although in aggregated form (e.g. Spanish Village and International Cottages are treated as consolidated CIPs rather than multiple individual building projects). It was not the intent or mandate of this report to update the FCA analysis, but rather to use it as one resource among many. (While it is outside the scope of this report to make a specific recommendation on this point, we would recommend that these Facilities Conditions Assessments be updated as practical in the coming years, as they are now approaching 10 years old. Updated assessments can help identify needed projects and provide more detailed insight around associated costs.)

The final prioritization list also includes broad estimates of project costs, but unlike the FCA analysis, the intent was not to develop a detailed budget for each building, but rather to provide orders of magnitude to aid in decision making around CIP priorities. Final project costs will be subject to many variables that are not possible to account for here, including time escalations, public procurement requirements, project scoping, and the applicability of the Zero Emissions Municipal Buildings and Operations Policy (“ZEMBOP”) requirements. As such, these estimates should be considered a broad guide for establishing priorities rather than as a definitive opinion regarding final cost.

**Projects List (identified as of December 2024)**

**61 projects are included on the list below**, identified by their location, source of the project, and year of identification. The list also includes a categorization of anticipated cost – in ranges between \$100,000 and \$250,000; \$250,000 to \$1 million; \$1 million to \$10 million; and projects greater than \$10 million. This list is sorted in alphabetical order by location, then by year identified from oldest to newest.

<p>1) <b>Alcazar Lot</b>  <b>Project:</b> Build new comfort station, Archery Range  <i>Source / Year:</i> General Fund Facilities Condition Assessment (2016)  <i>Cost range:</i> \$1 million to \$10 million</p>	<p>2) <b>Arizona Landfill</b>  <b>Project:</b> Remediate and reclaim landfill  <i>Source / Year:</i> Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)  <i>Cost range:</i> \$10 million+</p>
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<sup>3</sup> René A. Smith, Facilities Condition Assessments [FCAs] – Balboa Park Analysis (July 18, 2018)



<p>3) <b>Balboa Drive and Juniper</b>  <b>Project: Build new restroom</b></p> <p>Source / Year: West Mesa Project Priorities (2023)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>	<p>4) <b>Balboa Park Admin Building</b>  <b>Project: HVAC, Electrical, Roof, Windows, Plumbing</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Outstanding Balboa Project Notifications (2023)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>
<p>5) <b>Balboa Park Club</b>  <b>Project: Roof repairs, exterior painting, windows, security systems</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Outstanding Balboa Project Notifications (2023)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>	<p>6) <b>Banker Hill</b>  <b>Project: Create more walking trails/connections</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Consultations (2023)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>
<p>7) <b>Bird Park</b>  <b>Project: Artistic upgrades</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>	<p>8) <b>Casa de Balboa</b>  <b>Project: Roof and roof ornamentation repairs</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Outstanding Balboa Project Notifications (2023)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>
<p>9) <b>Centro Cultural de la Raza</b>  <b>Project: Roof and flooring repairs</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Consultations (2023)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>	<p>10) <b>Desert Garden</b>  <b>Project: Design and construct improved walkway through the garden areas and add benches</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>
<p>11) <b>Florida Canyon</b>  <b>Project: Construct and maintain primary trails for vehicular access by security patrol and maintenance crews</b></p> <p>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>	<p>12) <b>Florida Canyon</b>  <b>Project: Construct small parking lots to serve visitor to a native CA landscape preserve, restrooms, and a small botanical building</b></p> <p>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>
<p>13) <b>General / Park-wide</b>  <b>Project: Provide decorative enclosures at dumpster sites at various Park locations</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>	<p>14) <b>General / Park-wide</b>  <b>Project: Install variable pricing smart parking meters</b></p> <p>Source / Year: Balboa Park Parking &amp; Circulation Discussion (2020)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>



<p>15) Golden Hill Park  <b>Project: Create a neighborhood-oriented gateway feature at the entrance to Golden Hill Park</b>  <i>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>	<p>16) Golden Hill Park  <b>Project: Preserve the old stone fountain at the head of the SW canyon</b>  <i>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</i></p>
<p>17) Golden Hill Park  <b>Project: Demolition of existing comfort station and replacement with a new comfort station</b>  <i>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>	<p>18) Golden Hill Park  <b>Project: Install security cameras around park</b>  <i>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>
<p>19) Golden Hill Park  <b>Project: Rehab recreational center</b>  <i>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$10 million+</i></p>	<p>20) Golden Hill Park  <b>Project: Replace existing multi-purpose court lighting</b>  <i>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</i></p>
<p>21) Inspiration Point  <b>Project: Construct a Veterans' Memorial Garden</b>  <i>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>	<p>22) International Cottages  <b>Project: Foundation, site/flood mitigation, electrical work, plumbing</b>  <i>Source / Year: General Fund Facilities Condition Assessment (2016)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>
<p>23) Marston House  <b>Project: Rebuild historic pergola</b>  <i>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>	<p>24) Marston House  <b>Project: Restoration of canyon garden</b>  <i>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>
<p>25) Morley Field  <b>Project: Add a new group picnic area at the south end of Morley Field</b>  <i>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</i></p>	<p>26) Morley Field  <b>Project: Add wading pool to pool facility</b>  <i>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>



<p>27) <b>Morley Field</b>  <b>Project:</b> Construct a group picnic facility and two playgrounds between the ballfields and the pool/community center area</p> <p>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)                  Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>	<p>28) <b>Morley Field</b>  <b>Project:</b> Refurbish the Senior Citizen center in an architectural style that meets the aesthetic of the Park</p> <p>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)                  Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>
<p>29) <b>Morley Field</b>  <b>Project:</b> Relocate the velodrome to the present City Operations Station</p> <p>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)                  Cost range: \$10 million+</p>	<p>30) <b>Morley Field</b>  <b>Project:</b> Renovate Comfort Station, Morley Field - Velodrome</p> <p>Source / Year: General Fund Facilities Condition Assessment (2016)                  Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>
<p>31) <b>Morley Field</b>  <b>Project:</b> Install new field light system for the multi-purpose field with remote or call-in scheduling capabilities</p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)                  Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>	<p>32) <b>Morley Field</b>  <b>Project:</b> Replace deteriorated group picnic shelter cover</p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)                  Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>
<p>33) <b>Morley Field</b>  <b>Project:</b> Upgrade tot lot to meet State and Federal accessibility and safety guidelines</p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)                  Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>	<p>34) <b>Municipal Gym</b>  <b>Project:</b> Upgrade restrooms, tiles, fixtures, mechanical</p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)                  Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>
<p>35) <b>Museum of Us</b>  <b>Project:</b> Rehabilitate building – seismic, electrical, mechanical</p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)                  Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>	<p>36) <b>Museum of Us</b>  <b>Project:</b> Parge coat repairs at the main west entry of the Park (esp. by the plaque by the walkway)</p> <p>Source / Year: Consultations (2023)                  Cost range: \$100,000 to \$250,000</p>
<p>37) <b>Museum of Us</b>  <b>Project:</b> Repair retaining wall</p> <p>Source / Year: Outstanding Balboa Park Notifications (2023)                  Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>	<p>38) <b>Natural History Museum</b>  <b>Project:</b> Fire alarm system strobes, panels, sprinklers, new roof and paint</p> <p>Source / Year: Consultations (2023)                  Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>



<p>39) <b>Neighborhood Edge</b>  <b>Project:</b> Install pedestrian/bicycle trails to connect between Date and Maple Streets</p> <p>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>	<p>40) <b>Neighborhood Edge</b>  <b>Project:</b> Rehab five play areas for children of different ages along the Edge</p> <p>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>
<p>41) <b>Neighborhood Edge</b>  <b>Project:</b> Remove Comfort Station at 28th and Beech</p> <p>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>	<p>42) <b>Neighborhood Edge</b>  <b>Project:</b> Renovate Comfort Station at 28th and Grape</p> <p>Source / Year: General Fund Facilities Condition Assessment (2017)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>
<p>43) <b>Operations Yard</b>  <b>Project:</b> Convert existing 20th and 'B' Central Operations Yard to 17 additional acres of Golden Hill Community Park</p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</p> <p>Cost range: \$10 million+</p>	<p>44) <b>Palisades</b>  <b>Project:</b> Construct a large space parking structure that will be capped with a rooftop plaza</p> <p>Source / Year: Central Mesa Precise Plan (1992)</p> <p>Cost range: \$10 million+</p>
<p>45) <b>Palisades</b>  <b>Project:</b> Construct a visitor center to serve the Southern Central Mesa</p> <p>Source / Year: Central Mesa Precise Plan (1992)</p> <p>Cost range: \$10 million+</p>	<p>46) <b>Palisades</b>  <b>Project:</b> Plan and build Firestone Singing Fountain</p> <p>Source / Year: Committee of 100 Strategic Plan (2021)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>
<p>47) <b>Palm Canyon</b>  <b>Project:</b> Balboa Park Urban Trail System - Palm Canyon extension</p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</p> <p>Cost range: \$100,000 to \$250,000</p>	<p>48) <b>Pan American Plaza</b>  <b>Project:</b> Design and construct improvements (requires construction of Organ Pavilion parking structure)</p> <p>Source / Year: Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements (2018)</p> <p>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</p>
<p>49) <b>Pepper Grove</b>  <b>Project:</b> Renovate Comfort Station, North Pepper Grove</p> <p>Source / Year: General Fund Facilities Condition Assessment (2017)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>	<p>50) <b>Pepper Grove</b>  <b>Project:</b> Renovate Comfort Station, South Pepper Grove</p> <p>Source / Year: General Fund Facilities Condition Assessment (2017)</p> <p>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</p>





<p>51) <b>Pershing Maintenance Yard / Inspiration Point Service Yard</b>  <b>Project: City fleet vehicles charging infrastructure (solar)</b>  <i>Source / Year: Climate Action Plan (2022)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>	<p>52) <b>Pershing Recreation Complex</b>  <b>Project: Construct a competition-level soccer field</b>  <i>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$10 million+</i></p>
<p>53) <b>Pershing Recreation Complex</b>  <b>Project: Provide a pedestrian/bicycle bridge to Inspiration Point and the Central Mesa over Pershing Drive</b>  <i>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$10 million+</i></p>	<p>54) <b>Pershing Recreation Complex</b>  <b>Project: Provide new parking for 218 cars adjacent to the facilities</b>  <i>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$10 million+</i></p>
<p>55) <b>Pershing Recreation Complex</b>  <b>Project: Provide open turf with picnic tables, play structures for small children</b>  <i>Source / Year: East Mesa Precise Plan (1993)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</i></p>	<p>56) <b>Pine Grove</b>  <b>Project: Renovate Comfort Station, Pine Grove</b>  <i>Source / Year: General Fund Facilities Condition Assessment (2017)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>
<p>57) <b>Spanish Village</b>  <b>Project: Repair damaged wood, windows, roof, doors, stucco; reconstruct missing 1935 Building</b>  <i>Source / Year: Central Mesa Precise Plan (1992)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$10 million+</i></p>	<p>58) <b>Starlight Bowl</b>  <b>Project: Full rehabilitation</b>  <i>Source / Year: Committee of 100 Strategic Plan (2021)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$10 million+</i></p>
<p>59) <b>War Memorial</b>  <b>Project: Add air conditioning</b>  <i>Source / Year: Consultations (2023)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$250,000 to \$1 million</i></p>	<p>60) <b>World Beat</b>  <b>Project: Construct Cultural Plaza in shared space between World Beat Center and Centro Cultural de la Raza</b>  <i>Source / Year: BP Cultural Experience Plan (2021)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>
<p>61) <b>World Beat</b>  <b>Project: ADA building compliance upgrades + ADA-compliant ramp; Rehab floors, electrical, mechanical, lighting, restrooms</b>  <i>Source / Year: Consultations (2023)</i>  <i>Cost range: \$1 million to \$10 million</i></p>	



## Non-CIP Priorities

In addition to the projects reflected in the CIP prioritization list, there are other projects and initiatives identified by community members and/or planning documents that do not translate easily into CIP priorities. These include projects that involve broad, Park-wide goals; projects that can be addressed as staff-level projects; and projects that are not under the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego. We have included this list – 44 projects – for reference purposes.

	Location	Project Description	Source	Year
1	Florida Canyon	Submit the complete list of plant species and maintenance programs to the City of SD Planning Department for review during subsequent environmental review	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
2	General	Provide picnic tables and pedestrian trails throughout the Park	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
3	General	Designate certain areas for Uber/Lyft	Balboa Park Parking & Circulation Discussion	2020
4	General	Decarbonization of all city facilities	Climate Action Plan	2022
5	General	Electric infrastructure upgrades	Climate Action Plan	2022
6	General	Increase the tree canopy	Climate Action Plan	2022
7	General	Increased bike parking	Climate Action Plan	2022
8	General	Increased public transportation	Climate Action Plan	2022
9	General	Increased sidewalks	Climate Action Plan	2022
10	General	Moped and bike parking (secure station)	Climate Action Plan	2022
11	General	Signage / Wayfinding Project	Balboa Park Signage RFP	2023
12	Golden Hill Park	Maintain visual corridors through the trees for positive views southwest to downtown San Diego and Inspiration Point, north to Florida Canyon, the remainder of East Mesa and the golf courses	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
13	Golden Hill Park	Plant new trees to replenish the historic landscape	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
14	Golden Hill Park	Provide three levels of park signage for historic interpretation of the stone fountain, the memorial oak grove, and the park in general	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
15	Golden Hill Park	Refurbish trails	Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements	2018



	Location	Project Description	Source	Year
16	Morley Field	Open area, active and passive recreation areas	Unfunded Balboa Park Improvements	2018
17	Museum of Contemporary Art	Repair and clean drinking fountain in the colonnade in front of the Museum of Contemporary Art	Consultations	2023
18	Natural History Museum	Power wash and paint walls	Consultations	2023
19	Neighborhood Edge	Construct and maintain primary trails for vehicular access by security patrol and maintenance crews	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
20	Neighborhood Edge	Install individual picnic tables throughout the area	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
21	Neighborhood Edge	Provide a trail between 28th and 30th Streets along Switzer Canyon	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
22	Neighborhood Edge	Provide pedestrian traffic crossings at all intersections which enter onto the Park	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
23	Plaza de Panama	Floor washing and polishing of the covered colonnades to the east heading to the Plaza de Panama	Consultations	2023
24	Prado	Minor repairs to arcades built in early 2000s	Consultations	2023
25	Redwood Bridge Club	New Doors	Outstanding Balboa Park Notifications	2023
26	San Diego Arts Institute	Remove decorative fountain that leaks into the building	Consultations	2023
27	San Diego Arts Institute	Window maintenance	Consultations	2023
28	San Diego High	Lighting upgrades for Balboa Stadium	Consultations	2023
29	San Diego High	Make Inspiration Point safe from suicide	Consultations	2023
30	Sky Plaza	Construct and maintain primary trails for vehicular access by security patrol and maintenance crews	East Mesa Precise Plan	1993
31	West Mesa	Add parking insets on each side of Balboa Dr for Cabrillo Bridge foot traffic and dog park access	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
32	West Mesa	Add walkway from the Marston Point parking lot to the Fire Alarm Building and northward	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023



	Location	Project Description	Source	Year
33	West Mesa	Community recreation center with senior, adult, teen, and kid programs and facilities	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
34	West Mesa	Enhance pedestrian entrance at Elm and Sixth for better link to Downtown	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
35	West Mesa	High visibility art and/or historic monument signs for entries at Laurel and Upas	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
36	West Mesa	Low ropes course, balance logs and bouldering at the edge of the Boys and Girls camp	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
37	West Mesa	More walking trails	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
38	West Mesa	More welcoming picnic areas	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
39	West Mesa	Native American gardens with native San Diego plant species and interpretive signage	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
40	West Mesa	Public art	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
41	West Mesa	Re-created historic Kate Sessions nursery, with a volunteer center and restored original planting	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
42	West Mesa	Small rustic, natural amphitheater for multiple uses and gatherings	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
43	West Mesa	Tram turnaround near El Prado and Balboa Drive for connecting Central and West Mesas	West Mesa Project Priorities	2023
44	World Beat	Replace exterior lighting to enhance safety and security	Consultations	2023



## 4 Sample Prioritization Scoring

To demonstrate how to use the prioritization framework to score projects on this list, we scored 10 projects from the master list; sample projects were selected to represent different areas of the Park and AEA’s available knowledge of the project. It is important to note that this scoring serves only as an example, as there may be details that AEA is not privy that would change the scoring of some of these projects.

**Figure 1 Sample Scoring**

Prioritization Framework Criteria	Weight	Alcazar Lot - Build new comfort station, Archery Range	Arizona Landfill - Remediate and reclaim landfill	Balboa Drive and Juniper - Improved restroom at Balboa Drive and Juniper	Balboa Park Admin Building - HVAC, Electrical Roof	Bankers Hill - Create more walking trails/connections	Casa de Balboa - Roof and roof ornamentation repairs	Centro Cultural de la Raza - Roof and flooring repairs	Desert Garden - Design and construct improved walkway through the garden areas and add benches	Balboa Park Club - Roof repairs, exterior painting, windows, security systems	Florida Canyon - Construct and maintain primary trails for vehicular access by security patrol and maintenance crews
Capital Maintenance Need	8	3	3	2	3	1	3	3	2	3	3
Equity and Accessibility	6	3	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
Historical, Cultural, and Aesthetic Significance	6	1	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	3	1
Visitor Experience: Enhances Recreational Activity	2	3	1	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	1
Visitor Experience: Addresses Mobility Issues	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Visitor Experience: Increases the # of Visitors	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
Community Engagement	4	2	3	3	1	3	1	3	1	1	1
Alignment to City Priorities	3	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	2	2
Environmental Sustainability	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Co-Benefit and Partnership	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	1	1	3	2
Feasibility	2	3	0	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	3
Innovation	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Economic Impact	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Funding Plan	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Rank</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>

Based on this scoring and sample of selected projects, there are four projects that scored the same: Alcazar Lot and Balboa Park Club, and Bankers Hill and Florida Canyon. To break the tie, we looked at which project scored highest on the criterion with the highest weight (Capital Maintenance Need). For example, between Alcazar Lot and Balboa Park Club, they both scored 3 on Capital Maintenance Need, so we looked at the next criterion with the highest weight (Equity and Accessibility), which Alcazar Lot scored highest on. If that score had been the same, we would move on to the next criterion with the highest weight and so on. The same methodology was applied to Bankers Hill and Florida Canyon to break the tie.

For this sample scoring of selected projects, the projects ranked as follows:



1. Centro Cultural de la Raza – Roof and flooring repairs (91 points)
2. Alcazar Lot – Comfort station, Archery Range (84 points)
3. Balboa Park Club – Roof repairs, exterior painting, windows, security systems (84 points, with a 1 in Equity and Accessibility)
4. Casa de Balboa – Roof and ornamentation repairs (81 points)
5. Balboa Park Admin Building – HVAC, Electrical Roof (78 points)
6. Arizona Landfill – Remediate and reclaim landfill (76 points)
7. Balboa Drive and Juniper– Improved restroom at Balboa Drive and Juniper (74 points)
8. Florida Canyon – Construct and maintain primary trails for vehicular access by security patrols and maintenance crews (66 points, with a 3 in the top-weighted criterion)
9. Bankers Hill – Create more walking trails/connections (66 points, with a 1 in the top-weighted criterion)
10. Desert Garden – Design and construct improved walkway through the garden areas and add benches (62 points)

### Example Project Scoring

As mentioned above, these projects are from the master list, but this scoring exercise should be viewed as a sample and these projects should be re-scored by the city as part of the prioritization process. However, below is the rationale behind AEA's example scoring for one of the projects.

#### Project: Bankers Hill – Create more walking trails/connections

- **Capital Maintenance Need:** 1 – This project is not on the 2016 deferred maintenance list and while the area in subject scores relatively well in the facility condition index, it is still part of an unrealized West Mesa Precise Plan.
- **Equity and Accessibility:** 1 – This project has limited impact on underrepresented communities or longstanding inequities.
- **Historical, Cultural, and Aesthetic Significance:** 2 – This project would create moderate enhancements to the natural beauty of the area.
- **Visitor Experience – Enhances Recreational Activity:** 3 – This project would enhance recreational activity in the area and improve the broader visitor experience because it would allow visitors to exercise, walk, and enjoy the West Mesa through more trails and connections. This came up in the stakeholder consultation process.



- **Visitor Experience – Addresses Mobility Issues:** 1 – This could resolve some mobility issues in the park by providing people more walkways and connections between areas. This also came up in the stakeholder consultation process.
- **Visitor Experience – Increases the # of Visitors:** 2 – Creating more walking trails could provide moderate increased usage of the park as people could enjoy the park differently than they have before.
- **Community Engagement:** 3 – The Bankers Hill Community Group included this project as part of their priorities for the park and the West Mesa specifically in a report shared with the AEA team. They also brought this project up during the community engagement sessions that AEA held as part of the process of developing a prioritization framework for the park.
- **Alignment to City Priorities:** 1 – This project does not connect to broader City priorities or plans and therefore scores low.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** 1 – There are minimal resiliency benefits to creating walking trails for the park. They could reduce car usage by offering better connections, but it is not likely to have significant impact.
- **Co-Benefit and Partnership:** 2 – This project could connect to a wider park project or could be bundled up with other similar projects in the area. For example, if there is support for a West Mesa Precise Plan, this could be included or completed as a part of that.
- **Feasibility:** 3 – This project does not depend on other projects being completed in order for it to start.
- **Innovation:** 1 – This project would create a new opportunity, but it would not necessarily be new or distinctive.
- **Economic Impact:** 0 – This project will not generate revenue.
- **Funding Plan:** 0 – There is no funding plan for this project in place (to our knowledge).



## 5 Approach to the Development of the Prioritization Framework

### Park Leadership Consultation

To inform the initial development of the prioritization framework, AEA conducted 63 interviews with stakeholders across the Park and the City including: key departments such as Parks and Recreation, Mobility, Tourism, Real Estate Assets; leaders of non-profits organizations operating in the Park; special permit use holders; key representatives of neighborhood groups and community leaders; and other partners.

The following themes emerged from the stakeholder consultations AEA conducted as of January 2024 (in alphabetical order) and were identified as priorities for the Park:

- **Accessibility:** refers to spaces in the Park being easy to approach, enter, operate or participate in/use safely and with dignity by a person with a disability
- **Cleanliness:** includes cleanliness of trash cans, bathrooms, and the general Park area
- **Food options:** refers to the variety of available food options in the Park from price points and types of cuisines to location and number of options
- **Landscaping:** includes maintenance and upkeep of green spaces across the Park
- **Mobility:** includes parking (ease of finding parking, proximity of parking lots, etc.), proximity and ease of public transportation, bike lanes, trams, and other transportation issues
- **Public safety:** refers to the feeling of physical safety in the Park and elements that contribute to that (e.g. having more Park Rangers, more lighting, security of bathrooms, etc.)
- **Sustainability:** includes anything related to the City's Climate Action Plan and environmentally sustainable practices
- **Upkeep of Buildings:** includes the upkeep of buildings, façades (paint, structures themselves such as roofs, walls, windows, etc.)

The emerging themes from the consultations were added to a website created using the Social Pinpoint tool ([www.balboaparkpriorities.mysocialpinpoint.com](http://www.balboaparkpriorities.mysocialpinpoint.com)) as a way to engage the community, and people were asked to prioritize these themes. In addition to this, AEA tested these in an intercept survey conducted during December Nights and in Morley Field and a regular online survey (open from January to March), and the results helped inform the first draft criteria developed for the prioritization framework. Below is the first draft of the criteria (in alphabetical order) before it was tested with the community in the public engagement sessions and through Social Pinpoint. The criteria in red were either eliminated or expanded based on community input, updated to better reflect the underlying priority, or combined with another.





**Draft 1 of Criteria (Pre-community engagement sessions)**

- **Activation:** Does the project improve the broader visitor experience? Does it enhance recreational and social activity?
- **Alignment to City Focus:** Does the project align with other City policies and plans, including Build Better SD, the Climate Action Plan, and Mobility Plans?
- **Alignment to Parks Plans:** Does the project align with priorities identified in the 2021 Parks Master Plan, the Balboa Park Master Plan, or the relevant Park Specific Plans, if still relevant?
- **Co-Benefit and Partnership:** Does this project connect to other projects or initiatives either within the Park or in the surrounding area? Does it lead to possible partnerships? Can it be bundled with adjacent projects? Is project completion needed before another project can be started?
- **Community Support (renamed):** What is the extent of public support for this project?
- **Economic Impact:** Does this project generate additional revenue or decrease operational expenses, either for the city or for the not-for-profit organizations operating within the Park?
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Does this project provide opportunities for enhanced environmental resiliency?
- **Equity:** Does this project increase access for structurally excluded communities, either through organizations that operate in the Park or through direct connections with communities?
- **Funding Plan:** Is there an appropriate funding plan to complete the project?
- **Health/Safety/Legal Compliance:** Does the project pose a health/safety/environmental risk or address legal compliance?
- **Historical, Cultural, and Aesthetic Significance:** Does this project support the Park's designation as a National Historic Landmark District or protect, maintain, or create beauty and awe?
- **Innovation:** Does this project create the opportunity for something new and distinctive?
- **Capital Maintenance Need:** How long has this project been on the deferred maintenance backlog? Where does the subject facility or area rank in the facility condition index?
- **Visitation:** Does this project increase the number of visitors for active or passive use? Is the project in a location with high visitation/foot traffic?



These criteria were then tested at five community engagement sessions across the Park and online (see *more detail below*). They were also presented to the Balboa Park Committee at their monthly public meeting in February 2024. In addition to this, the criteria were also added to Social Pinpoint where the community was able to vote and prioritize these criteria as well. More information on the feedback from the community and results derived from the community engagement sessions can be found in a Public Engagement Summary report (*provided to the City separately earlier in the process*).

### **Public Engagement: Community Sessions**

AEA led five community engagement sessions as part of the public engagement plan of the prioritization framework work. These sessions were held the last week of January and first week of February 2024 at Bankers Hill Club, Santa Fe Room at the Balboa Park Club, and at Golden Hill Recreation Center. A fourth session was held virtually on Zoom, followed by an additional in-person session at World Beat on March 6th. Below are some key takeaways from the meetings. We have incorporated relevant feedback from the engagement sessions into the criteria. Photos of these sessions can be found in the Appendix.

### **Key Takeaways**

- There was a desire to specifically include “recreational social activity” or “community use” as part of activation to further clarify what that criteria means and differentiate it from visitation. This addition will also be more representative of activation happening at the edges of the Park, in the neighborhoods, as the Central Mesa has different kinds of activation.
- The funding plan criteria generally scored low across all engagement sessions. People consider that it is an obstacle in giving a project visibility when projects have to raise 2/3 of the funding before they’re even made public.
- The idea to create different weighting or criteria for projects in the Central Mesa versus other parts of the Park emerged in different sessions. Ultimately, most people disagreed with “splitting up the Park,” but suggested that there could be different weighting at least.
- Visitation interpreted as quantifiable foot traffic was not a desired criterion, as it seemingly only benefits the Central Mesa; the neighborhood-adjacent parts of the Park don’t necessarily want increased foot traffic. As a result, we changed this criterion to visitor experience.
- In terms of the criterion “Alignment to Park Plans” (now merged with “Alignment to City Focus” as “Alignment to City Priorities”), there were questions around whether all



Park plans should have the same weight as some may be more or less relevant than others.

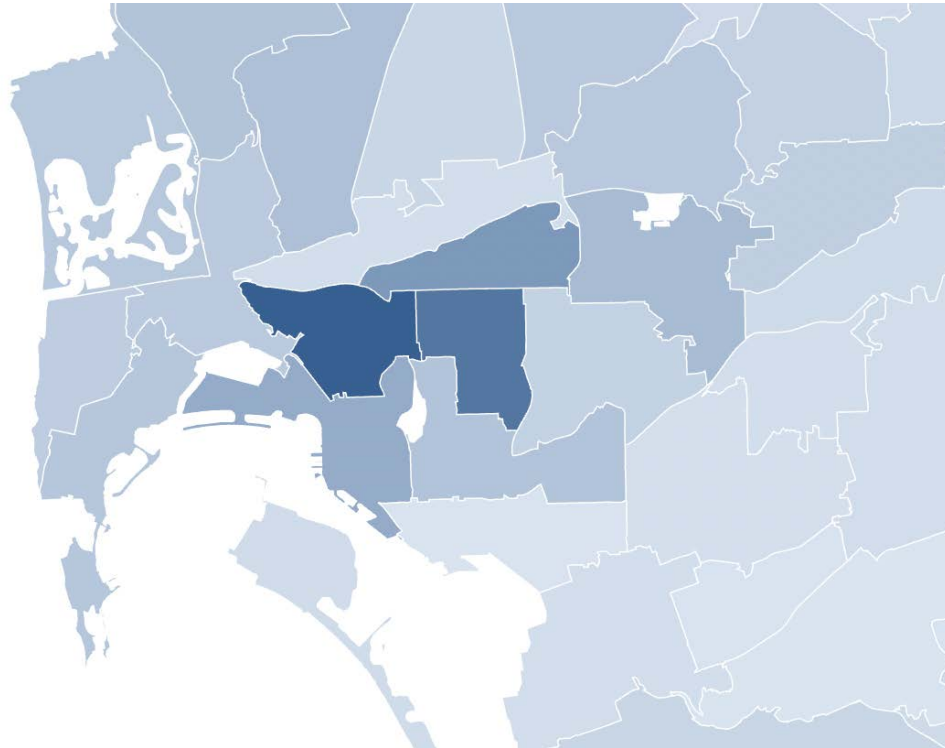
- Relatedly, the desire and need for another Balboa Park Master Plan was prevalent and people would like this prioritization framework to serve as a bridge between the current moment and when the new Master Plan is developed.
- There were questions around whether accessibility should sit within the Equity criteria or whether it should be its own separate category.
- Across all sessions, there were many suggestions for non-capital projects, particularly in the form of wayfinding, the needs of tourists (surveying them), and beautification improvements.
- Accessibility is seen as two-fold: getting to the Park and moving within the Park. The former could be evaluated as part of a city-wide mobility initiative, while capital projects within Balboa Park would fall in the latter category.
- In a few sessions, co-benefit and partnership and community engagement felt like overlapping categories.
- In some sessions, innovation was considered for elimination.



### Public Engagement: Survey

AEA surveyed a total of 2,805 people throughout the engagement process. 2,714 people responded online, with 92% coming from the San Diego region. The online survey was advertised through the City's platforms, as well as other stakeholders' platforms. 91 people responded on-site in person between Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> and Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> (December Nights). On Friday, AEA surveyed 10:00am-8:00pm at the Zoo and Central Mesa. On Saturday, AEA surveyed 9:00am-11:00am at Morley Field. 82% of respondents were from San Diego County, 9 respondents were from out of state, and 4 respondents were from outside the US. Complete survey results can be found in the attached presentation.

**Figure 2** Quantity of Survey Respondents, mapped within San Diego



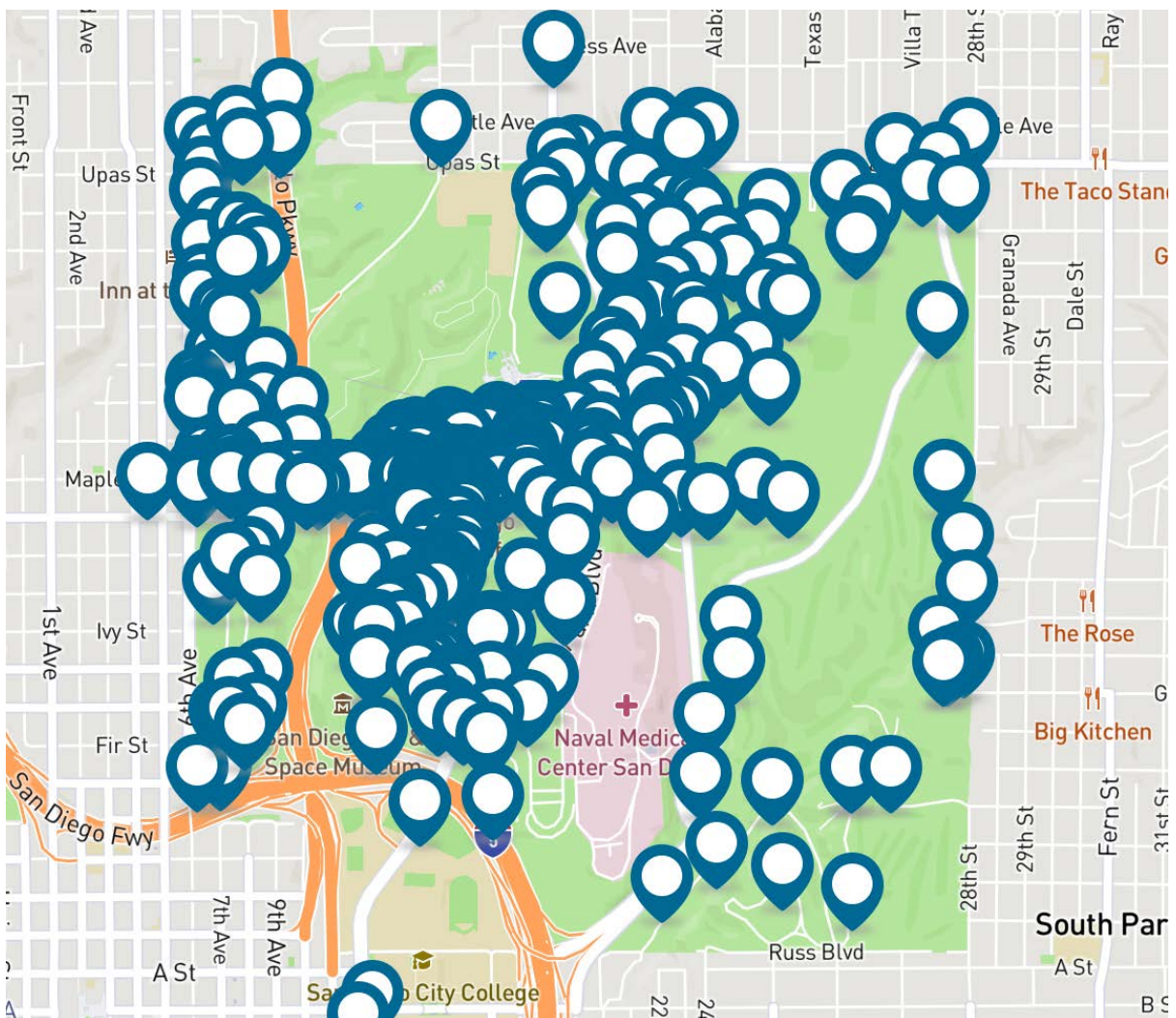
*Of the 2,805 respondents, 21 respondents were from outside of California, and 92% were from the San Diego region.*

### Public Engagement: Online (Social Pinpoint)

#### Where would you like to see improvements in Balboa Park?

Visitors were able to provide geographically specific feedback by pinning comments directly onto a map of Balboa Park. A majority of the comments were related to transportation (i.e., bike and bus routes, parking locations, sidewalk access, walking trail maintenance), while others focused on safety (i.e., lighting at night), aesthetic improvements, and increased recreational areas for all ages. Key themes included secure bicycle parking, increased shade, suggestions around parking,

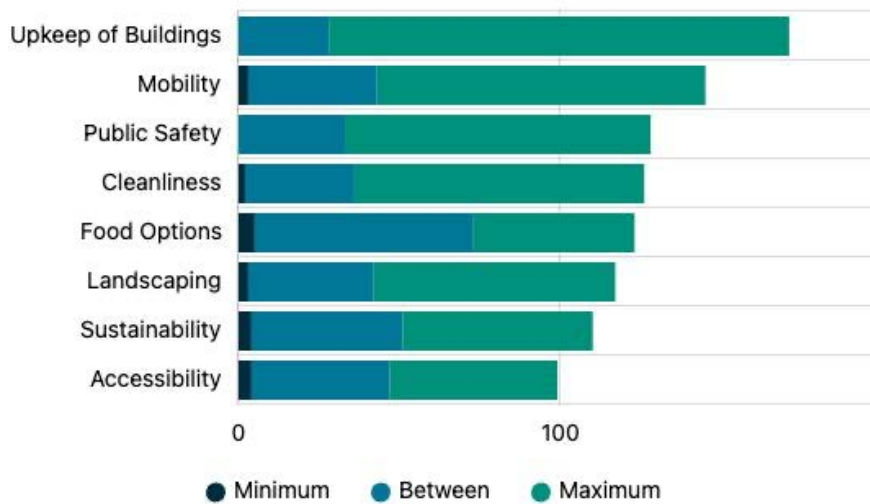
Response to this question totaled **437 contributions from 114 contributors.**



### What are your top priorities for the Park?

Visitors were able to allocate 10 points across eight different potential priorities (see chart below). The maximum points that a contributor could give each potential priority was 3, the minimum 1, and 2 would be “between.” The points attributed to these priorities were then taken into consideration when creating the draft criteria. *Upkeep of buildings* received the most votes, followed closely by *mobility* and *public safety*.

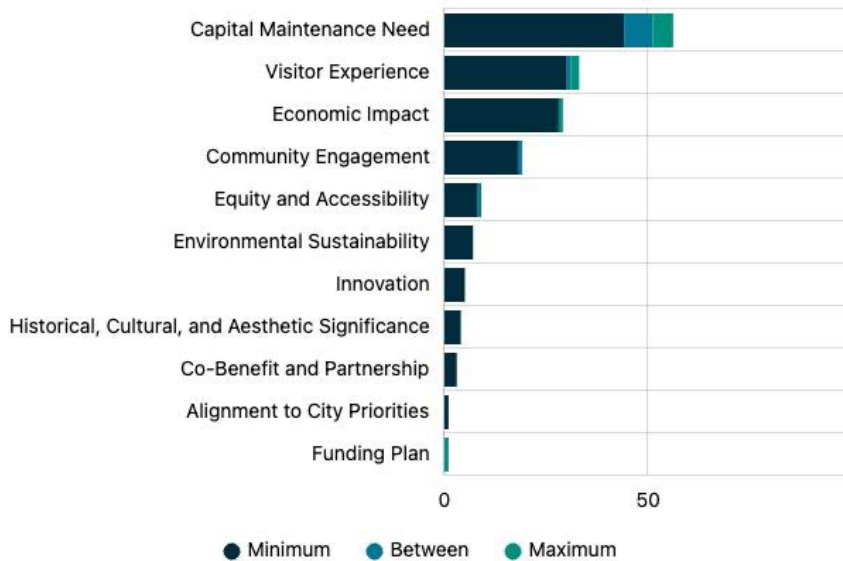
Response to this question totaled **181 contributions from 123 contributors**. Note that for this feature on the Social Pinpoint website, contributors were able to vote multiple times.



### Which draft criteria do you want to prioritize?

The above priorities question was replaced once initial draft criteria had been determined. This allowed for another virtual opportunity for visitors to rank draft criteria outside of the in-person community engagement sessions. *Capital maintenance needs* were ranked as top priority, followed by *visitor experience* and *economic impact*.

Response to this question totaled **65 contributions** from **18 contributors**.



### Share any additional feedback with the City about Balboa Park?

This section allowed for open response feedback that could include images, audio, or video. Key issues mentioned were around the number of vendors in the Park, insufficient lighting at night, improvements in the West Mesa, bike/bus lanes, bicycle parking, and a lack of sunshade.

Response to this question totaled **30 contributions from 28 contributors**. A word cloud summarizing key words in responses is below.



### Post-Sessions Draft Criteria

After the community engagement sessions, certain criteria were combined, eliminated, or edited for clarity. The criterion of *Activation* was eliminated and folded into an expanded *Visitor Experience*, which now encompassed elements from *Activation* and *Visitation*. *Health/Safety/Legal Compliance* was deemed of the highest importance, such that if a project scored high in this category because it posed a health, safety, or legal risk, then it would need to be immediately completed regardless of how it scored against the other criteria. For this reason, this criterion was removed from the list, but any project that is an immediate issue in this area will supersede all others. *Equity* was expanded to include *Accessibility* as well. The *Alignment to Parks Plans* criterion was eliminated and folded into the *Alignment to City Priorities*, which now includes mention of alignment to Parks Master Plans.





## 6 Design Review Process

An overview and recommendations of the design review / approval process were considered as part of the development of the Prioritization Framework, as part of exploring how Balboa Park projects can move forward more smoothly. The Prioritization Framework would be deployed early in a future process for City projects (see *Figure 7, later in this section*), but the recommendations here could be applied to all Balboa Park projects.

### Current Process

Balboa Park is its own Community Planning Area – and thus has its own planning arc and a higher level of scrutiny beyond typical parks projects in San Diego. Based on conversations with Parks & Recreation staff, the process incorporates elements of Council Policy 600-33 (see *more below*) – but also provides for greater levels of review for projects that have preservation or environmental impacts. There are five potential review processes – identified as A through E in internal documents provided by Parks & Recreation staff.

- A. Minor operational and maintenance improvements that are (a) in substantial conformance with Park policy and development documents / standards (Balboa Park Master Plan and/or the Central Mesa or East Mesa Precise Plans and associated amendments) and (b) outside the National Historic Landmark District and do not impact other historic resources or potential historic resources (older than 45 years).
- B. Major additions to the Park that are (a) in substantial conformance with Park policy and development documents and (b) outside the National Historic Landmark District and do not impact other historic resources or potential historic resources (older than 45 years).
- C. All projects that are (a) in substantial conformance with Park policy and development documents and (b) within the National Historic Landmark District or may impact historical resources, and *do* meet Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Properties.
- D. Projects that require a Site Development Permit:
  - i. All projects that are (a) in substantial conformance with Park policy and development documents and (b) within the National Historic Landmark District or may impact historical resources, but *do not* meet Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Properties.
  - ii. All projects that propose development on Environmentally Sensitive Lands or create manufactured slopes at a gradient steeper than 25% and a height of 25 feet or more.
- E. Projects that are not in conformance with Park policy and development documents and require Plan amendments.



Details and steps in each of these processes are discussed below.

### **Background: Staff Review**

Parks and Recreation staff review all proposed projects for conformance with Park Policy documents, development standards, and to make a preliminary assessment as to whether a Plan Amendment is required. Staff also review proposed projects for compliance with existing leases and use permits, and prepare the reports provided to each advisory and approval body.

### **Background: Council Policy 600-33**

Last amended in January 2016, Council Policy 600-33 outlines how most San Diego park projects advance within the public input & department-review process. The 600-33 review process is facilitated by the Parks & Recreation staff, and public input and review is led by the Balboa Park Committee (the appropriate "Recreation Council" identified in the policy). Elements from this process are embedded in Balboa Park review processes B, C, D, and E, as discussed further below.

### **Background: Environmental Issues**

All projects on public land or constructed with public funds require environmental review by the Environmental Analysis Section of the Development Services Department; environmental review is based on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and in some cases the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). Environmental Analysis Section staff determine whether projects are consistent with the original Environmental Impact Reports completed for the Balboa Park Master Plan and the Central and East Mesa Precise Plans, or whether separate exemption, negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or additional Environmental Impact Report is required. If an Environmental Impact Report is required, a separate consultant is required to prepare the document.

Additionally, any work that requires excavation on or within 1,000 feet of the perimeter of the Arizona Landfill requires preparation and review of plans and a Community Health and Safety Plan by the Local Enforcement Agency and the Environmental Services Department. (The westernmost part of the Balboa Park Golf Course is included in this area.)

### **Background: Historical Resource Issues**

Projects located within the National Historic Landmark District or that may have an impact on designated or eligible historic resources are reviewed by Heritage Preservation staff; these staff may refer projects to the Historical Resources Board and/or its Design Assistance Subcommittee for review and recommendation.



**Process A: Minor Operational and Maintenance Improvements**

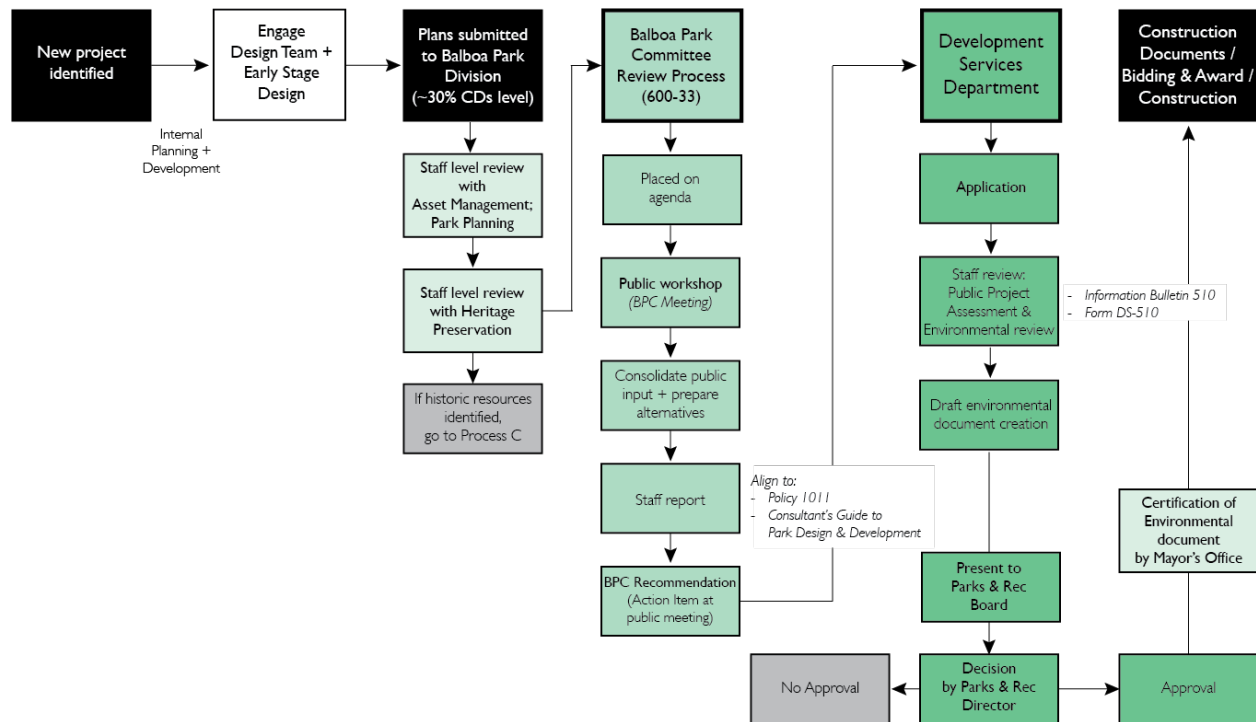
For these projects, an application and plans are submitted to the Balboa Park Division of the Parks & Recreation department. A staff level review is conducted before a decision to approve or deny the application; staff present this to the Balboa Park Committee as an information item. For minor operational and maintenance improvements within the National Historic Landmark District, staff are also encouraged to consult with Heritage Preservation staff in City Planning department.



**Process B: Major additions to the Park in conformance with Park plans and that do not impact historic resources**

Major projects are typically defined as projects of significant scale and/or projects that might displace other park uses. An outline of key steps in Process B are included in the diagram below:

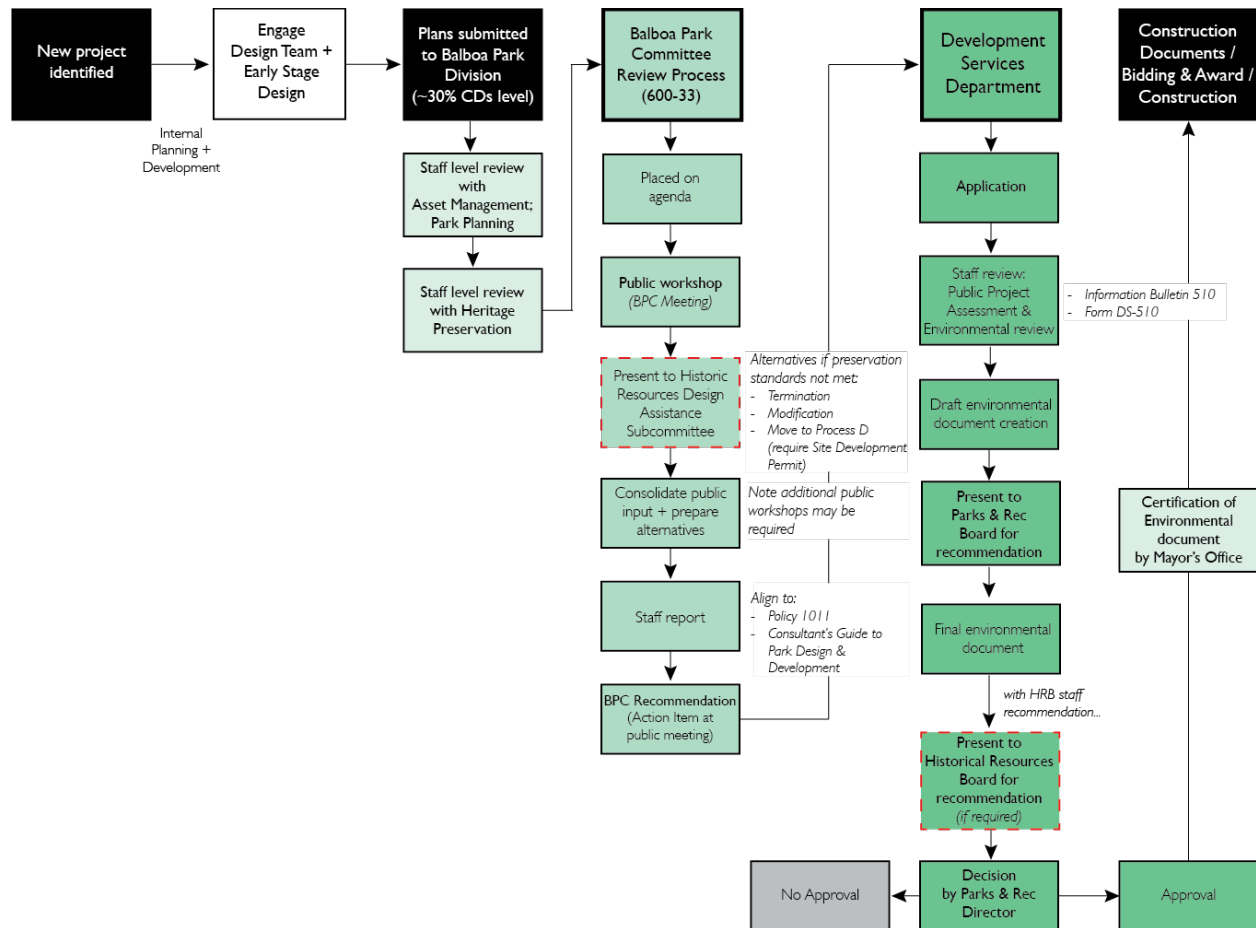
**Figure 3 Process B**



**Process C: Major additions to the Park in conformance with Park plans and that impact historic resources**

This process incorporates presentation to the Historic Resources Board's Design Assistance Subcommittee. An outline of key steps in Process C are included in the diagram below:

**Figure 4 Process C**



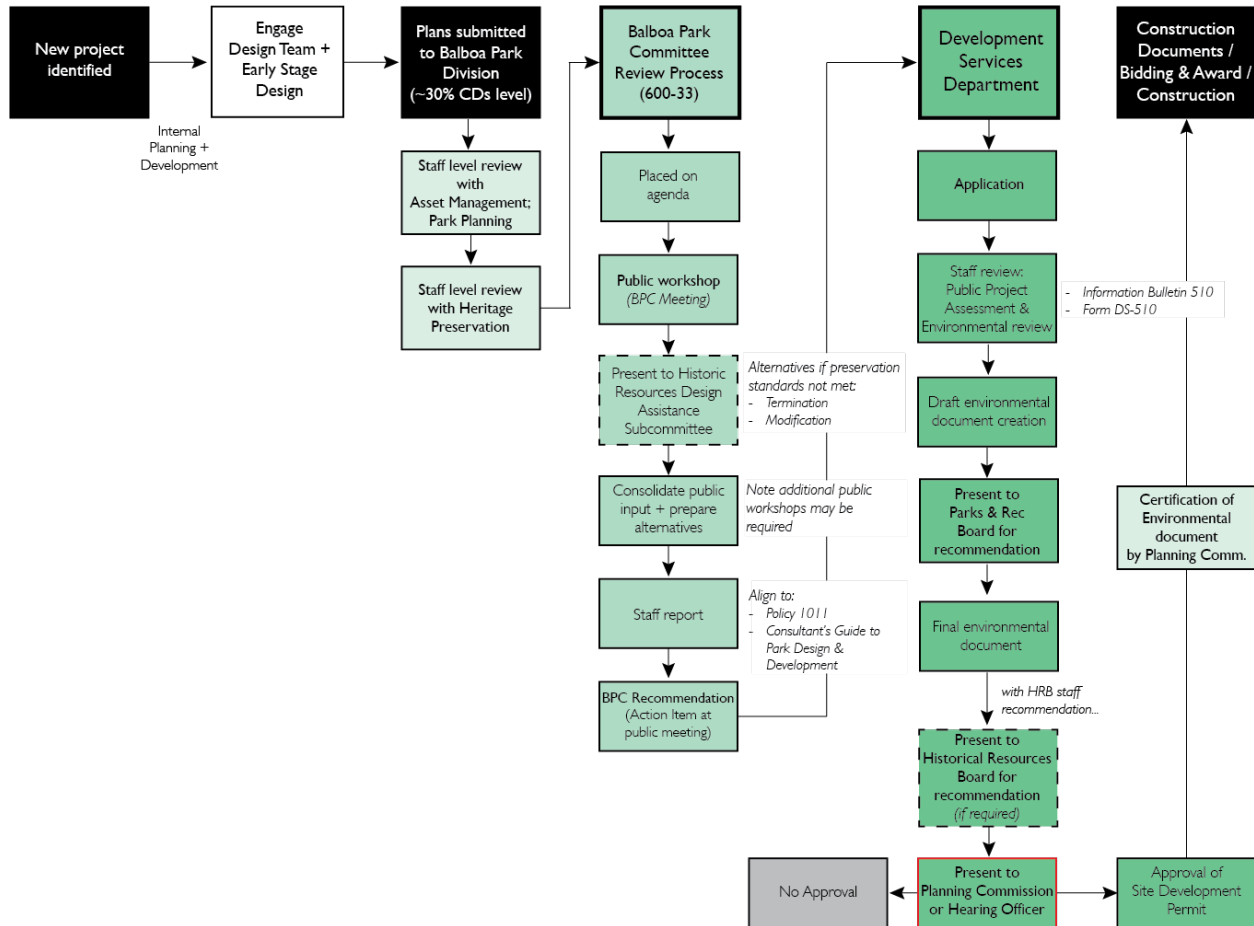
Red boxes = new from previous process  
 Dotted lines = optional based on need / recommendation



**Process D: Projects in conformance with Park plans, but that require a Site Development Permit**

Projects that require a site development permit – whether because of their potential impacts of historic resources or because of their site environmental impacts – must present to the Planning Commission / Hearing Officer for approval and certification of the related environmental document. An outline of key steps in Process D are included in the diagram below:

**Figure 5 Process D**



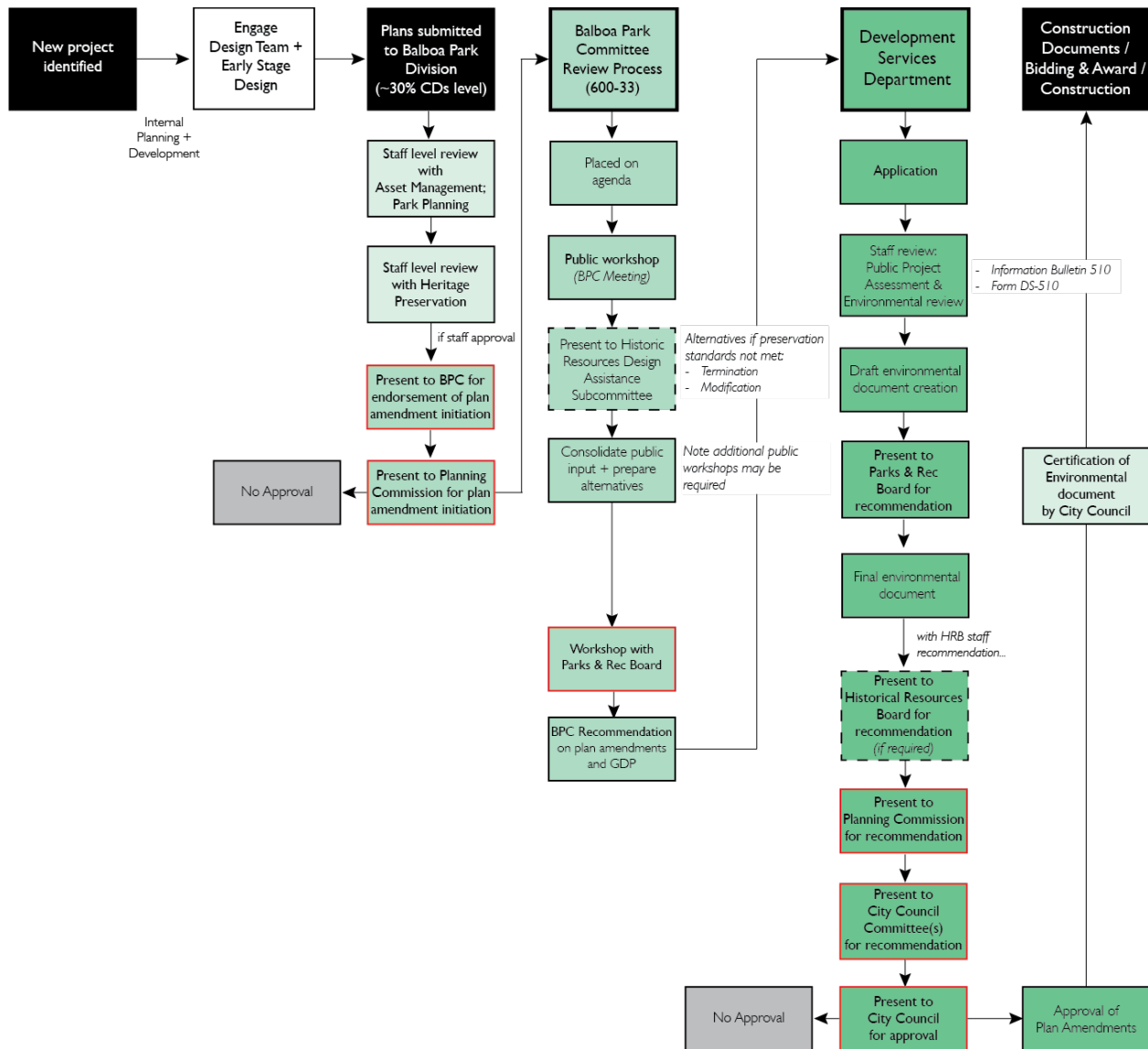
Red boxes = new from previous process  
 Dotted lines = optional based on need / recommendation



**Process E: Projects not in conformance with Park plans**

Projects that are not in conformance with Park policy documents / plans need to present to the Planning Commission to initiate an amendment process, and receive approval for plan amendments from the City Council. An outline of key steps in Process E are included in the diagram below:

**Figure 6 Process E**



Red boxes = new from previous process  
 Dotted lines = optional based on need / recommendation



## Current Situation and New Opportunities

Though the current process is outlined internally, focus groups conducted with recent project sponsors (and thus process participants) as part of the Prioritization Framework project suggested that the process in practice does not maintain the same clarity for external participants. Specific challenges highlighted during focus group conversations include:

- Lack of clarity around the arc of the overall process, including who held power for final approvals;
- Limited or outdated guidelines or standards for reference, or limited (or no) access to those guidelines for all parties involved;
- Missing expertise in consideration of design innovation or other opportunities for positive value or impact;
- Delays in advancing the process, resulting in additional costs in project delivery for project sponsors; and
- Lack of binding decisions, resulting in previous decisions being revisited – causing further delays.

Opportunities to address these concerns include enhancing clarity around the overall process and its timelines; identifying more specifically the decision makers, and expanding the perspectives considered in decision making; and expanding early opportunity for public and (particularly) expert comment forward somewhat, such that it can be considered when it is easier to address in the design process. Specific recommendations are made later in this document, but one idea that regularly was mentioned was reintroducing a *design review* process.

## Design Review and Assistance

A design review subcommittee of industry experts was once part of project approval in Balboa Park but was removed when Council Policy 600-33 was last amended (Resolution R-310202 - 01/28/2016) – with the idea that it would streamline the process in the face of increasing delays.<sup>4</sup> City staff have made themselves available for consultation and assistance, but conversations with project sponsors during our process revealed frustration at a lack of input, clarity, and standardization of what would be required of them when taking projects to the Balboa Park Committee. While design review does add another step in the process, it can result in stronger outcomes and help to minimize delays further downstream in the

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<sup>4</sup> The Parks & Recreation Board continues to have a Design Review Committee as part of its bylaws.





path of design and construction by adding a layer of expertise that builds on the skills of the design team.

Design review, as a concept, is identified as a positive both by the American Planning Association<sup>5</sup> as well as overseas in places such as the United Kingdom, where the Design Council coordinates these processes within the National Planning Policy Framework. The process is set up so that experts can review identified projects, gather public comment, identify issues, and resolve differences at an early stage in the creative process. In its idealized form, design review provides an independent and impartial process where experts on architecture, landscape, infrastructure, and other aspects of the built environment assess the positive and negatives of a proposal – helping project sponsors and design teams improve the quality of buildings and places for the public. While the process is often called 'design review', it is ultimate about providing 'design assistance' toward improved outcomes.

Design review is also typically focused on human-centered outcomes: how a building or place can better meet the needs of the people who will use it and of everyone who will be affected by it. As such, it can also help support a lens of equity and inclusion as projects are designed and constructed.

The UK's Design Council lists the benefits of Design Review as:

- Bringing a greater breadth and depth of experience than is available within the project team or planning authority.
- Offering expert views that take account of a wide range of complex issues and so helps to achieve sustainable development.
- Looking at schemes in context and can challenge the design brief or the assumptions that lie behind the project.
- Giving planners, developers and their design teams confidence that they have had the best possible independent advice on design quality.
- Supporting and encouraging good design and innovative proposals.
- Identifying weak and inappropriate schemes at an early stage, when radical changes can be made with a minimum of wasted time and effort.
- Offering opportunities for continued learning, particularly about how to assess design quality, to the people observing the review process.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Hinshaw, Mark and Marya Morris, FAICP. *Design Review: Guiding Better Development*. PAS Report 591. July 1, 2018

<sup>6</sup> Design Council. "Design Review: Principles and Practice" Originally published in 2013; edited in 2019.



## Recommendations

While the inclusion of a design review / assistance cycle into the input and approval process would not solve all the challenges identified during our conversations with Balboa Park users, it would provide a opportunity to make overall refinements to work that may require it to succeed within the Balboa Park context. This work would be centered on key principles, which continue to guide City staff (and those who might serve to assist or on design review committees), as well as provide perspective to those participating as project sponsors / applicants. These principles call for a process to be:

- *Transparent, Accessible, and Objective* – providing all with clear terms of reference or standards for review, and ensuring the process does not create delays and results in more predictability in project initiation and approval
- *Informative & accountable* – advancing the process early as possible to create positive impact in the design process
- *Proportionate* – not spending too much time on projects that won't be impactful, or creating long delays for small scale projects
- *Independent, Multi-disciplinary, and Expert* – ensuring review participants (i.e. those serving on committees and panels) have a broad and inclusive make up, with people from different backgrounds
- *Consensus focused* – identify issues to be resolved early, and mechanisms to reduce controversy and polarization

Our recommendation is that the design review process is not an approval or denial process, but would provide assistance both to the staff and to the applicant at a relatively early phase of the design process – after concept or schematic design of building projects or equivalent stages of other notable interventions such as public spaces, major landscape interventions, or other projects related to the Park's physical spaces. We would also suggest providing a clear “job description” or mandate to those in the process, so they have a clear starting point for their reference – for example (to be edited as desired or needed): “to provide professional advice to ensure projects enhance the Park experience, respond appropriately to existing Park plans and design guidelines, and reduce design-related impediments to the progress and completion of projects.”

One final note is that a proposed place for design review within the broader approvals process also provides a new entry point into the process, creating an opportunity to assign a ‘Process Manager’ who can help serve as a guide for third-party (non-City) project sponsors within the larger approval process.



## Near-term Recommendations

Specific recommendations include:

### 1. Provide updated design standards

An intelligent design review process requires working to a set of clear, agreed standards. Focus group participants suggested possibilities around criteria to support safety, accessibility, and the visitor experience.

There are design standards included in the Balboa Park Master Plan, and these might typically guide a design review committee – but the Master Plan was created in 1989. While these may still be helpful clues, perspectives on design have changed a great deal in the 35+ years. As prelude to larger Master Plan process that has been put forward as a future priority by the Mayor<sup>7</sup> and others, we would suggest there are items identified within this prioritization framework that could serve as an interim update or more contemporary explanation beyond the standards that do exist in the current Master Plan. City staff can help translate these into clear “terms of reference” for staff and any future committee’s review.

These design standards may also provide benefit later in the process – to help clarify and communicate final decisions from the deciding party end of the approval process.

### 2. Refine thresholds and ensure they are met for the process

One of the identified principles is that a review process is proportionate – in other words, that months are not spent reviewing a small-scale project, nor that a major new building passes with a five-minute discussion item. The current approval process provides five paths for projects, which seems an appropriate differentiation – however, given confusion from users in our focus groups, we would recommend more clarity is provided early to different project scopes and where they are placed in the review process. One potential improvement would be to identify which process a project needs to go through at initial application, so that the project sponsor has clarity of what needs to be accomplished. The specific standards might also be further detailed – the report of the Design Review Exploratory Committee, for example, suggests that review would exclude operational items; signage (unless entirely new installations); landscape; and interior spaces (unless specifically requested).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Mayor Todd Gloria, State of Balboa Park address, August 8, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> The Design Review Exploratory Committee was an effort emerging from the Balboa Park Committee to explore these topics between 2020 and 2022. The group was chaired by Michael Stepner, Urban Designer and Former City Architect; other committee members included Michelle Abella-Shon, Project Officer II, Parks and Recreation Department; Kevin Carpenter, Architect, The Miller Hull Partnership, Former Design Review Board Member; Christina Chadwick, Assistant Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department; Jackie



Note that some focus group participants suggested setting threshold by levels of funding required – though this may be challenging to accommodate at a relatively early stage when cost and funding models are likely to be less well defined.

### 3. Standardize materials to be provided to Committee

While there are outlines for what needs to be provided to the Balboa Park Committee for review (see Park and Recreation Board Policy No. 1011 and the Consultants Guide to Park Design and Development), for smaller projects especially it may be helpful to create more standard templates that project sponsors can use as starting points for submission.

### 4. Clarify timing for engagement in the process

The ideal time for design review is at the early stage of design development: creating a conversation about work in progress, not a verdict. Therefore, we recommend design review as a first step in the engagement process, not the last. This can help identify aspects of design that should be improved and help resolve issues before the broader process advances. Ideally, this helps get to a positive decision quickly – with a better proposal for other required reviews, the less delay there is likely to be.

We would suggest that any design review report (and the design team's responses) also become part of the project's future trajectory as future approvals are considered – so that others can reference the insight of staff and/or an expert committee on an ongoing basis.

### 5. Appoint a process manager

An individual, overall “process manager” at the City staff level would be able to look across and work to support all necessary approvals – understanding the different parties involved in approvals and their key concerns, assisting in keeping to overall timelines, and helping different bodies understand prior approvals. (The Asset Management division provide some of this, but their resource likely needs to be supplemented and / or more specialized to the Balboa Park process.) They can be a “shepherd” for the process work as an advocate and arbitrator as the process unfolds – ensuring stability during the process. This may be an excellent role for a person with design education and/or past experience, who understands the work from multiple perspectives in the

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Higgins, Landscape Architect, Director of Planning, Design and Programs, Forever Balboa Park; Jim Kidrick, President & CEO, San Diego Air and Space Museum; Bill Lawrence, President/CEO, San Diego History Center; David Marshall, Architect, President, Heritage Architecture & Planning; Connie Matsui, Board Co-Chair, Forever Balboa Park; and Rene Smith, Parks Advocate



process. (If there are capacity constraints at City level, there could be an opportunity to appoint an appropriate not-for-profit organization to assist with this work.)

### Longer-Term Considerations and/or Other Ideas Discussed

Though there are near-term logistical challenges to the below two recommendations, we note their longer-term potential and value.

#### 6. Creating a Design Review Committee (or similar structure)

The seating of a committee to assist the design review process needs to balance the creation of a group that can serve the principles identified with the practical logistics of convening design review within the structure of the City of San Diego. Options that have been discussed include:

**1) Changing the San Diego Municipal Code (§26.30) to establish a new standalone advisory committee.** The committee could be completely distinct from the Balboa Park Committee, or (more likely) it could serve as an advisory body to the BPC.

The benefits of this structure are that a newly created committee could accommodate the most independent perspectives, from range of backgrounds. A committee could be formed with 6-8 members from across architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, design, and community representation. In the longer-term, it might also provide for a structure for design review more broadly across Parks & Recreation projects (potentially then with Balboa Park-specific subcommittee).

The challenge of this structure is that it requires changing the Municipal Code, which has been seen as not desirable by the City in the recent past.<sup>9</sup> Code §26.0108 states that such a change requires approval of the City Council, which needs an analysis of:

- The purpose and mission of the proposed new board or commission;
- Whether the proposed new board or commission could be incorporated into an existing board; and
- The potential fiscal and operational impact to the City of creating a new board or commission.

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<sup>9</sup> Consultation with members of the past Exploratory Committee revealed there was also discussion during their work about whether the City Charter would need to be updated; City Charter Section 43(a) provides that the City Council may create and establish advisory boards by ordinance, with all members of such boards appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.



The first of these points is outlined within this document (as well as the Exploratory Committee's report); the fiscal impact should be limited given the volunteer nature of the committee. The Board could potentially be incorporated into an existing one (the BPC or Parks & Recreation Board) – but given that it might also be part of broader design review process that is part of the Parks & Recreation strategic plan, it seems to serve a clearly desirable purpose.

**2) Adding a design advisory subcommittee to the Balboa Park Committee.**

Alternatively, a design advisory subcommittee could be added at the Parks & Recreation Committee level.

This set-up would be similar to the pre-2016 technical advisory committee structure, and it is the structure that was recommended by the Design Review Exploratory Committee. However, City staff have raised the issue that subcommittee members are required to be members of the full Balboa Park Committee. To accommodate the required expertise, it is likely that that BPC would need to be expanded. This is also possible to do, but it may result in challenges in obtaining quorum to convene and vote as the full Committee – resulting in undesirable delays for both capital projects as well as other Balboa Park business. BPC members are otherwise busy people who are volunteering their time in service of the Park; this is a logistical challenge that should be carefully considered before expanding the number of members on the committee.

**3) Working with an area not-for-profit organization (for example: Forever Balboa Park, etc.) to provide advice in design review.** This provides an opportunity to avoid some of the challenge of creating or expanding formal committees at the City level – but (depending on the relationship with the not-for-profit) it may not allow for as much integration with a broader public input process. It may also require a fee to be paid to the not-for-profit entity to help with the administrative costs of this structure. This seems less optimal from a transparency and accountability perspective. There may also be limits as to whether a private organization can opine into binding decisions.

**4) City staff to provide direct advisory recommendations.** Some design review structures are managed in-house; however, our sense is that this may create a bottleneck given staff's other work requirements and also run counter to the goal of obtaining broader input – instead condensing more of the process in a smaller number of people.

All of these provide some near-term logistical challenge as discussed above, and the pros and cons need to continue to be weighed before proceeding.



## 7. Ensure a design review committee includes a range of design & building disciplines and perspectives

Once a form of the committee becomes established, it would be important to ensure that it can provide intelligent and expert insight – to go beyond 'strong opinions' to offer credible views based on past experience. One core principle of design review is to provide advice from a diverse range of experts with a broad spectrum of professional skills and experience: architects, planning, landscape architecture, urban design, historic preservation, sustainability and environmental services, accessibility, civil and structural engineering, transport, public art, and property development are all relevant backgrounds that might be tapped.

Similar to a range of professional expertise, it will also be valuable to have community members to sit on the committee. Balboa Park touches multiple neighborhoods that surround it – as well as having an impact across San Diego. The committee should be geographically diverse, as well as demographically diverse to ensure it can represent a broad range of perspectives on impact.

A scale of 6-8 people for the committee would likely accommodate these goals (depending on the scale of disciplines required), while also keeping logistics of meeting relatively simple.



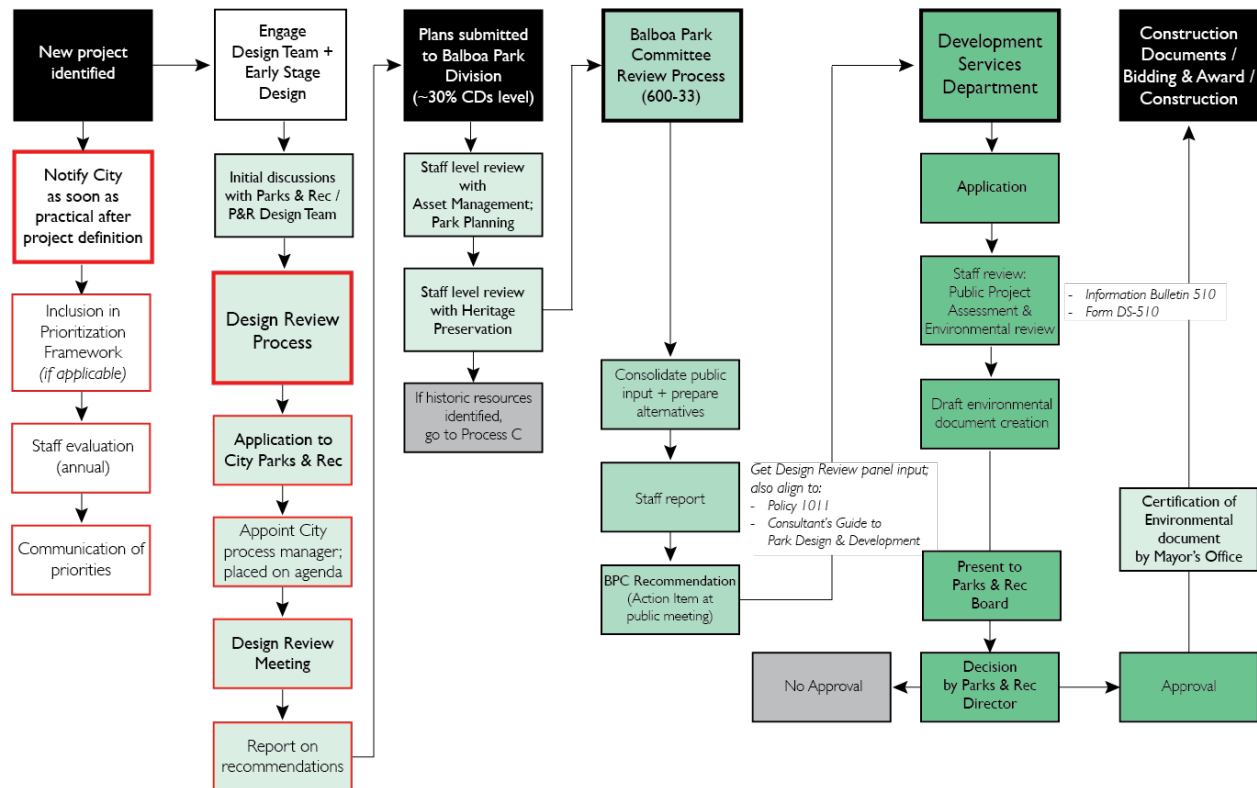
### Overview of Proposed Future Process

In the near-term, without the seating of a separate Balboa Park design review committee, other design review committees are available (e.g. from historic preservation) and a slightly expanded remit from City staff may be able to provide some of the value of a design review process.

A more fully revised process is indicated in the below diagram, based on the complete set of near-term recommendations and longer-term considerations. The diagram shows the overlay on the existing Process B as it is the most straightforward – however, similar overlays could be done in processes C, D, and E. If approved, such a diagram could also be used to help orient and guide project sponsors / applicants through the process.

*Note the initial entry into engaging a design team + early stage design would be slightly different if the City is responsible for the work (engaging the City’s Parks & Rec design staff) or a private entity is responsible (engaging a design team of their choice, then connecting with the City’s Parks & Rec design staff).*

**Figure 7 Overview of Potential Process (refer to current Process B)**



Red boxes = new from previous process





## Acknowledgements

This project was completed by Daniel Payne, Managing Principal; Laura Zucker, Senior Associate; Catalina Casas, Consultant; Paul Parkhill, Senior Associate; and Bella Stenvall, Research Analyst, of AEA Consulting. AEA would like to extend our thanks to the many people at the City of San Diego and the Balboa Park Committee who have contributed to this work – in particular, Jon Richards, Deputy Director, Balboa Park Division, San Diego Parks & Recreation; Christina Chadwick, former Deputy Director, Balboa Park Division; Charlie Daniels, Project Officer II, Balboa Park Division; and Stephen Hill, Senior Advisor of Resiliency and Economic Recovery, San Diego Mayor's Office.



## Appendix

### Consultees

Elizabeth C. Babcock, Forever Balboa Park  
Howard Blackson, Balboa Park Committee  
Andrea Caldwell, San Diego Zoo  
Makeda Cheatom, World Beat Cultural Center / Balboa Park Committee  
Brice Ciabatti, City of San Diego Parks & Recreation Department  
Peter Comiskey, Balboa Park Cultural Partnership  
Julie Coker, San Diego Tourism Authority  
Bruce Coons, Save Our Heritage Organization  
Horacio Correa, Fleet Science Center  
Carlos Cristiani, Fleet Science Center  
Charlie Daniels, Balboa Park Division  
Sarah Dawe, Balboa Park Committee  
Carol Dedrich, Girl Scouts of America  
Chris Eddy, Balboa Park Committee  
Barry Edelstein, The Old Globe  
Andrea Feier, Civic Dance Arts  
Andy Field, City of San Diego Parks & Recreation Department  
Jonathan Glus, City of San Diego Arts & Culture Division  
Judy Gradwohl, San Diego Natural History Museum  
Stephanie Green, City of San Diego Parks & Recreation Department  
Jack Harkins, Veterans Museum and Memorial Center  
Roberto D. Hernández, Centro Cultura de la Raza  
Stephen Hill, City of San Diego Mayor's Office  
Nik Honeysett, Balboa Park Online Collaborative  
James G. Kidrick, San Diego Air & Space Museum  
Bill Lawrence, San Diego History Center  
Hal Leggate, City of San Diego Facilities Division  
Lenny Leszczynski, San Diego Automotive Museum  
Stacey Lo Medico, former City of San Diego staff  
Brer Marsh, Balboa Park Committee  
Greg Mattson, Lawn Bowling Club  
Penny Maus, City of San Diego Real Estate Assets Department  
Neal Meyers, International Cottages  
Alyssa Muto, City of San Diego Department of Mobility and Sustainability  
Dang Manh Nguyen, Balboa Park Committee  
Alex Orbovich, The Old Globe

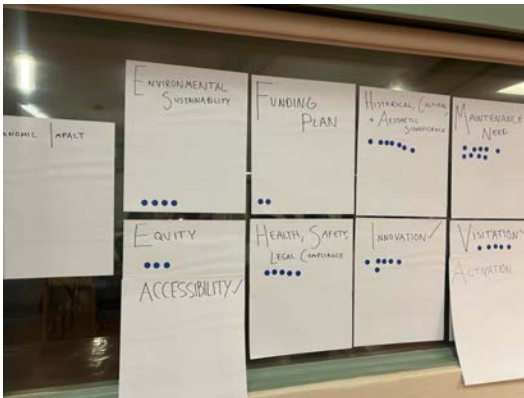


Dennis Otsuj, Japanese Friendship Garden  
Micah Parzen, Museum of Us / Balboa Park Committee  
John Percy, Bankers Hill Community Group  
Megan Pogue, Timken Museum of Art  
Ross Porter, Committee of 100  
Michael Remson, San Diego Youth Symphony  
Sean Roy, Boy Scouts of America  
James Saba, San Diego Junior Theatre  
Danell Scarborough, former City of San Diego staff  
Tim Shields, The Old Globe  
René Smith, Bankers Hill Community Group  
Roger Showley, Committee of 100  
Allison Soares, Balboa Park Committee  
Mike Stepner, Committee of 100  
Steve Stopper, Save Starlight  
Andrew Utt, San Diego Art Institute  
Kathy Vandenheuvel, Balboa Park Committee  
Rita Vandergaw, Comic Con Museum  
Roxana Velasquez, San Diego Museum of Art  
Jim Waring, Burnham Group  
Jennifer Weavers, Balboa Park Online Collaborative  
Inki Welch, International Cottages  
Stephen Whitburn, City of San Diego City Council  
Jessica York, Mingei International Museum

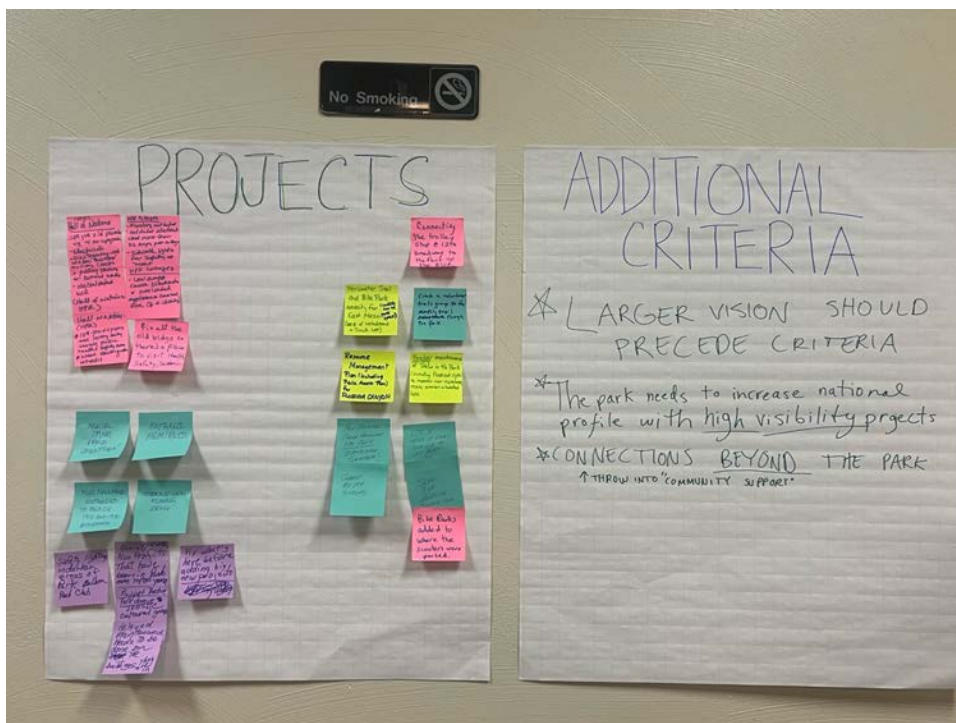


## Photos from Community Engagement Sessions

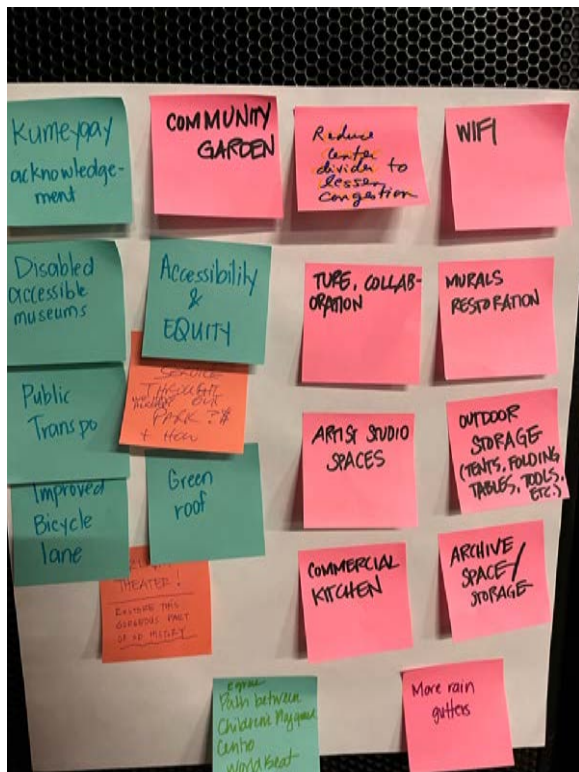
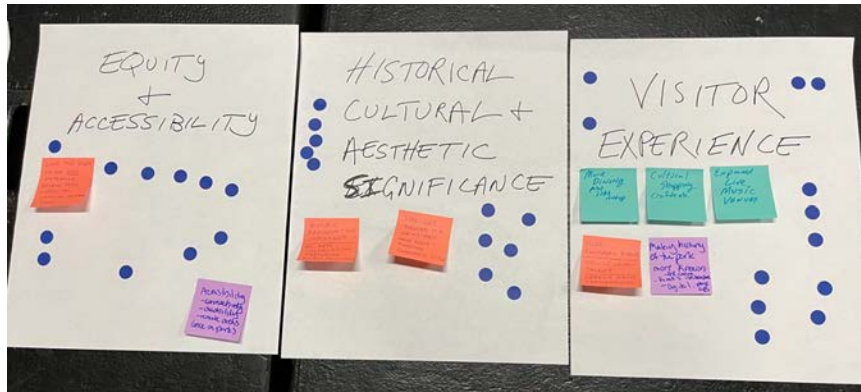
### Bankers Hill Club



### Golden Hill Recreation Center



### World Beat



**List of Public Engagement Session Attendees<sup>10</sup>**

Elizabeth Babcock, FBP (x2)  
Marcella Bothwell, Chair Parks and Rec Board  
Pat Budruson, BHCG  
Peter Comiskey, BPCP (x4)  
Mark Dillon, Museum of Us  
Chris Eddy, BPC  
Susan Elliert, BHCG  
Vicki Estrada, Estrada Land Planning  
CRO Officer Gonzalez, San Diego Police Dept  
Mary Lu Gultekin, BHCG  
Lindsey Hawes, City of San Diego Mobility  
Jackie Higgins, FBP  
Stephen Hill, Mayor's Office  
Joanée Johnson, Girl Scouts San Diego  
Tershia Jelgin  
Bill Keller  
Janice Kurth, Girl Scouts San Diego  
Danielle Lamar, International Cottages  
Patricia Law, KNSJ Talk show host  
Elizabeth Lockwood  
Stacy Maxa, Girl Scouts San Diego  
Kevin Meadows, SDMBA  
Paul Meyer  
Kathy Mirtalla, BHCG  
Alessandra Moctezuma, San Diego Mesa College  
Susie Murphy, SD Mountain Biking Association (SDMBA)  
Claude Organ, San Diego Imperial Council Boy Scouts of America  
Sue Parry-Silva  
Rafael Parra (x2)  
John Percy, Bankers Hill Community Group  
Ross Porter, C100  
Gillian Rizza, BPCP  
Christopher R.  
Phillip Sammuli, FBP  
Stephanie Saathoff, Clay Co  
Jim Silva

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<sup>10</sup> Note this list excludes attendees at the session at World Beat, as no sign-in sheet was captured.



Mike Singleton, Bankers Hill Community Group  
Rene Smith, C100  
Steve Stopper (x2)  
Mike Stepner, C100  
David Swarens  
Robert Thiele  
Phil Trom, City of San Diego Mobility  
Kathy Vandenheuvel, BPC  
Jim Waring, Burnham Center (x2)  
Jim Walker, San Diego Archers (x2)  
Kathryn Willetts  
Dawn Welch  
Denise Zellmann, Clay Co (x2)  
*+ other members of the Bankers Hill Community Group*

