

# Waterfront Park – Active Recreation Construction Project

## Frequently Asked Questions – Updated August 2023

### LAND AND LOCATION

#### How many people currently use the park?

Waterfront Park spans 12 acres and welcomes an average of 200,000 visitors a year.

#### Where will the active recreation amenities be located?

The active recreation area will be developed within the existing Waterfront Park at the corner of Pacific Highway and Grape Street in a 1.5-acre area, in the northeast quadrant. This area currently features a decorative plant garden, and is the most underused portion of the park.

#### Why was this site selected?

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to assess active recreation opportunities for the San Diego metropolitan area. DPR reviewed a variety of locations suitable for active recreation as part of the feasibility study component of the project. DPR hosted its first public meeting to gauge public preferences for the northeast corner of Waterfront Park on Jan. 29, 2020.

#### What does the concept plan look like?

The concept plan is loaded to the sdparcs.org website: [Waterfront Conceptual Landscape Plan 2023.06.06.pdf \(sdparcs.org\)](#).

#### Why wasn't Port land selected?

There were numerous limitations on Port land that prevented some of the amenities the public wanted in a new active recreation site, and it was determined that the Port was better suited for passive recreation. For example a dog park, basketball and pickleball courts would not be feasible on the Port land that was being considered – however, these were options at Waterfront Park with some reconfiguration.

#### How many trees will be removed from the project area?

DPR designed the active recreation project to protect as much of the existing garden and trees as possible. The project will have a net zero tree removal; though four trees will be removed, seven new trees will be added and five will be transplanted to new locations within the site.

### PARK AMENITIES

#### The new park will include:

- Off-leash dog zone with agility equipment
- Two pickleball courts
- 1 basketball court
- Table tennis
- A five-feature exercise station
- Shaded seating

- Lighting
- Preservation and enhancement of some of the existing garden

**How did you decide on these park amenities?**

This area was designed for and by residents, given the space available and the opportunity to provide multiple recreation options that could meet the needs of people of all ages, interests and abilities. The initial idea was prompted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, and it was carried forward by DPR staff via several public meetings, surveys, emails, calls and other staff-resident interactions. Staff used the priorities and potential amenities expressed by the community to develop four concept plans to help residents visualize how different features could be laid out on site, until a final design plan was adopted.

**How big is the off-leash dog zone?**

The off-leash dog zone will measure approximately 8,000-square-feet and will feature decomposed granite surfacing, agility equipment, trees and benches. A drinking fountain will have human and dog options. The dog park will not delineate between large and small dogs however, all sizes of dogs are welcome on leash at Waterfront Park.

**Will the courts be lit at night?**

The courts will be lit at night until 10 p.m. The site will have pedestrian-scale security lighting. All lighting will follow the guidelines set by the California Coastal Commission to limit light pollution for the surrounding area.

**How does this project address equity?**

The proposed project will expand active recreation opportunities in an area that does not currently have sufficient access to this type of program – especially options that are free of charge. Based on the available data from the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, there is an estimated 16 percent of the residents in the 92101 zip code that live below the poverty level. These new amenities offer space to socialize for emotional health and wellness, as well as for fitness which has physical, and mental health benefits.

**PROJECT TIMELINE**

- Jan. 29, 2020 – First Public Meeting & Online Survey #1
- Spring 2020 – Draft Concept Designs
- Oct. 19, 2020 – Second Public Meeting & Online Survey #2
- Winter 2020/21 – Synthesize Feedback & Draft Final Designs
- April 15, 2021 – Third Public Meeting
- Spring 2021 – Environmental Review/Construction Documents/CDP
- Jan. 05, 2022 – Fourth Public Meeting
- Jan. 26, 2022 – Board of Supervisors Hearing (Advertise and Award Construction Contract)
- Jan. 9, 2023 – Construction Contract Award
- Feb. 8, 2023 – Pre-Construction Meeting
- Spring 2023 to Spring 2024 – CONSTRUCTION ON ACTIVE RECREATION AREA
- Late Spring/Early Summer 2024 – Ribbon Cutting & GRAND OPENING

### **How did the Department of General Services Chiller Line Project impact this project?**

In early 2023, there was an emergency need to replace a main chiller line for the County Administration Center, which sits at the center of Waterfront Park. This pushed back construction on the active recreation area by several months – moving the start from early spring to late summer. During this time, and due to the nature of the project, additional fencing was posted for the protection of park guests while crews worked to upgrade the facility. The line has been fixed, the fencing has been removed and crews have started work on the active recreation area, albeit later than originally stated.

## **COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH**

### **Where can I get information on this project?**

Information on the Waterfront Park Active Recreation can be found on the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation website at:

<https://www.sdparks.org/content/sdparks/en/AboutUs/Plans/ParksImprovementPlan.html#waterfront>

### **How have you considered the public in your design process?**

DPR staff have led a bilingual (English/Spanish) and community-focused design process to build an active recreation area to meet the needs of residents and visitors of all ages, interests and abilities, in the 1.5-acre space allotted.

### **What public outreach have you done for this park?**

Outreach included flyers, emails and social media announcements for one on-person and three virtual public meetings and ongoing collaboration with local community groups. Below is more detailed information.

1. On Jan. 29, 2020, DPR hosted its first public meeting from 6 - 7 p.m. at the Hampton Inn, Pacific Room on Pacific Highway in San Diego to gain a better understanding of community preferences and desires for the northeast corner of Waterfront Park and surrounding areas. A total of 23 community members participated and the first survey was issued, which received a total of 159 responses.
2. DPR held its second public meeting on Oct. 19, 2020, from 5 to 6 p.m. via Zoom regarding the Waterfront Park Active Recreation Feasibility Study and to receive feedback on four concept designs, including possible amenities. A total of 50 individuals from 36 households tuned in to the virtual event, and DPR staff addressed 40 comments during the meeting. The second survey was issued at this time and received a total of 206 responses. A link to a recording of the second public meeting is available on request.
3. On April 15, 2021, DPR hosted its third public meeting from 5 to 6 p.m. via Zoom to present a final concept plan to the community for review and feedback. A total of 57 community members from 50 households participated in the event, and County staff addressed a total of 52 comments. A link to a recording of the third public meeting is available on request.
4. On January 5, 2022, DPR hosted its fourth public meeting from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. via Zoom to present the results of the previous public engagement surveys and the final conceptual plan that was developed into construction documents. A total of 44 people from 39 households participated in the event, and County staff addressed a total of 41 comments. A link to a recording of the fourth public meeting is available on request.

**Who can I talk to for more information?**

Amy Hoffman, Park Project Manager, is leading the Waterfront Park Active Recreation Project. She can be reached at 619-695-6003 or [amy.hoffman1@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:amy.hoffman1@sdcounty.ca.gov).

**PARK OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE****Will there be a fee for entry or use?**

The active recreation space will be open to the public during normal park hours, free of charge – like the rest of Waterfront Park.

**What are the hours for the new amenities?**

The active recreation area will follow the established hours of operation for Waterfront Park, which are from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. Gates for the off-leash dog park and pickleball courts will be locked when those areas are not in operation.

**Who can use the park?**

Parks are for everyone, and Waterfront Park is no exception. Amenities in the new active recreation area have been selected to match the priorities of residents of all ages, interests and abilities. The area will likely be used by local residents and residents of neighboring communities. DPR does not anticipate an influx of new visitors because of these new amenities.

**How can you ensure visitors will respect the park rules?**

We expect park visitors to adhere to park guidelines and County policies, which will be posted on signs throughout the park. Rules are essential to maintain order at the park, to promote safety and security, and to sustain the land. In addition to signs, we have park staff and on-site security personnel. We ask all park guests to say something if they see something suspicious so we can address the situation appropriately.

**How will you maintain the park?**

There are currently three fulltime employees and six seasonal part-time employees who are assigned to work at Waterfront Park. Once the project is completed, we anticipate two full-time and two seasonal part-time employees will be added to this work group.

DPR and associated staff work before, during and after park hours, and they receive additional support from volunteers. Maintenance projects include but are not limited to emptying trash, cleaning restrooms, mowing and irrigating lawns, tree and shrub maintenance, stormwater management and erosion control, debris removal, graffiti abatement, protection of natural and cultural resources, and the enforcement of all DPR codes and policies.

**Is there parking?**

As with all downtown destinations, parking is limited. Ridesharing and public transit are highly encouraged. The nearest MTS Trolley stop is located one block away from the park at the County Center/Little Italy Station and the MTS bus route 923 stops at Waterfront Park.

Metered street parking is also available. Additionally, parking is available Monday through Friday after 5 p.m. and weekends and holidays, underground, at Waterfront Park or a block away on the corner of Cedar Street and Kettner Blvd.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

### **Will the project comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)?**

Yes, the project will comply with CEQA and all applicable environmental regulations. The type of CEQA document that was prepared is an addendum to the previous Waterfront Park and Master Plan. The addendum was adopted by the Board of Supervisors Jan. 26, 2022.

### **What updated technical studies were conducted and when?**

An air quality analysis and greenhouse gas assessment, including analysis of proposed construction, was conducted in September 2021. A noise and vibration impact study, including analysis of proposed construction and daily use of amenities, was conducted in September 2021. In addition, visual simulations were conducted in November 2021 for aesthetic impacts and in compliance with the guidelines of the Coastal Commission.

### **Did we rely on previous environmental documents?**

The previously adopted Environmental Impact Report for Waterfront Park and Master Plan was used as the established environmental document for the area. From that report, an addendum was created with new technical studies related to the proposed active recreation. New air quality, greenhouse gas, noise and vibration technical studies were conducted for this proposed project in 2021. Data was cross analyzed with existing technical studies to provide a complete understanding of each study.

### **What are the next steps for the Environmental Analysis?**

The Waterfront Park Active Recreation addendum was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on January 26, 2022. DPR will implement all environmental restrictions identified to ensure there are no significant impacts to the environment as a result of the project.