

# CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

## PB&R COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item No. \_\_\_\_\_  
May 20, 2008

**TO:** PB&R Commission

**FROM:** Recreation & Senior Services Department  
Wes Morgan, Director — 949-644-3157 — [wmorgan@city.newport-beach.ca.us](mailto:wmorgan@city.newport-beach.ca.us)

**SUBJECT:** Sunset Ridge Park UPDATED Draft Concept Plan

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

1. Review the Sunset Ridge Park UPDATED Draft Concept Plan presentation by EPT Design Group.
2. Accept public comment regarding the UPDATED Draft Concept Plan.
3. Forward a PB&R Commission recommendation to the City Council regarding this Concept Plan.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Recreation Element of the *General Plan* which was approved by the City Council in 2006 addresses citywide issues and needs regarding park lands. The Recreation Element states that the service area of West Newport has a current deficit of 21.6 park acres. This is based on the standard of five acres of park land for each 1000 of population. Additionally, in Service Area 1 – West Newport, Sunset Ridge Park is designated as an active park which will include ball fields, picnic areas, a playground, parking and restrooms. The planning and outreach process for this project began in November 2007 and continues to move toward an approved concept plan.

At the City Council Study Session on March 25, 2008, the City Council received a report on the progress of the outreach and planning for the Sunset Ridge Park. The Council listened to public comment regarding the draft concept plan for Sunset Ridge Park. Issues which speakers brought forth to the City Council included the following:

- There is an immediate need for a baseball field for 13 and 14 year olds to play league games for the Newport Harbor Baseball Association in West Newport Beach.
- There is a need for more soccer fields for at least 1000 children who play soccer for AYSO 97 in West Newport Beach.
- Residents who live adjacent to the park site expressed the following concerns:
  - Traffic created by park users will be a problem for homeowners.
  - Noise created by youth sports games will disturb the nearby neighborhood.
  - Park facilities and athletic fields are being placed too close to homes.
  - Security for nearby residents will diminish.
  - There is a potential loss of scenic views.
  - Trash will be left by park users.
  - There will be a loss of privacy for homeowners.

At the conclusion of the City Council Study Session, the Council directed staff to revise the draft concept plan for the park. The Council wants to improve the park design in ways which continue to allow for the active park elements while addressing the concerns of the residents.

To achieve these goals, staff directed the City's architect to create a buffer zone between the private property owners and the sports fields, restroom, parking lot and playground. The updated draft concept plan now includes a new buffer zone which is 10 ft above the active park areas. The buffer zone creates the opportunity for the sports fields to retain the size needed for youth sports programs in West Newport while maximizing the use of the available land to protect the nearby residents from any potential issues brought on by activities in the park.

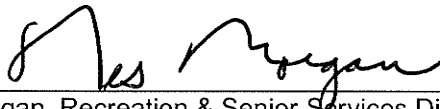
The elevation of the proposed Butterfly Garden and the Vista Point near Superior Avenue will be preserved at the present height of the site.

Also all the active park elements have been moved from a distance of 50 ft adjacent to the bordering properties to a new distance of at least 100 ft of clearance.

The updated draft concept plan is more than just a compromise from the original basic plan. It improves the park layout by making better use of the property to create a passive area near the residential properties, allowing for sports fields of the necessary size and retains the present elevation for the proposed Vista Point.

Following this Special Meeting of the PB&R Commission, the updated plan will be returned to the City Council for further review.

Prepared & Submitted by:



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Wes Morgan, Recreation & Senior Services Director

- Attachments:
1. General Plan Recreation Element 8-10
  2. General Plan Recreation Element 8-15
  3. General Plan Recreation Element 8-40-41
  4. Minutes from March 25, 2008 City Council Study Session
  5. May 20 2008 PB&R Commission Special Meeting Public Notice

## CITYWIDE ISSUES AND NEEDS

### Parks and Recreational Facilities

In June 2005, it is estimated that a total of 415.6 acres of parklands are needed within the City to accommodate the current population of 83,120 residents (utilizing the City standard of 5 acres per 1,000 population). As shown in Table 1, below, there are an existing total of 286.4 acres of parks and 90.4 acres of active beach recreation within Newport Beach with a combined total of 376.8 acres. Thus, this represents a total deficit of 38.8 acres of combined park and beach acreage citywide. Seven of the twelve service areas are experiencing a deficit in this combined recreation acreage. Three planned parks in West Newport, Newport Center, and Newport Coast would help alleviate the citywide park deficit. In addition to a deficit in combined park and beach recreation acreage, there is also an overall shortage in active playfields throughout Newport Beach. Many of the service areas within the City, as discussed in greater detail below, may have a park surplus but are still experiencing a deficit in active playfields. Also, it is difficult to provide playfields because of the large amount of land required for sports fields, the lack of suitable vacant land, and the high cost of such land within the City.

The citywide parks and recreation facilities needs described below have been identified through the following: (1) community surveys (administered from December 1996 to February 1997), (2) data shown in Table R1 (Parkland Acreage Needs), and (3) monitoring of the use of recreation programs and facilities.

**Table R1 Parkland Acreage Needs**

Service Area	Existing Park Acreage: June 2005				
	Park Acres Needed	Park Acres Existing	Active Beach Recreation Acreage	Combined Park/Beach Acreage	Deficit (-) Excess (+)
1. West Newport	64.7	9.1	34	43.1	-21.6
2. Balboa Peninsula	25.5	6.5	44	50.5	+25.0
3. Newport Heights/Upper Bay	64.3	50.2	0	50.2	-14.1
4. Santa Ana Heights	3.2	6.8	0	6.8	+3.6
5. Lower Bay	17.3	0.1	0	0.1	-17.2
6. Balboa Island	17.9	0.3	1	1.3	-16.6
7. Eastbluff	31.3	71.0	0	71.0	+39.7
8. Big Canyon	13.9	0	0	0	-13.9
9. Newport Center	10.9	19	0	19	+8.1
10. Corona del Mar	44.4	23.9	11.4	35.3	-9.1
11. Harbor View	72.2	99.5	0	99.5	+27.3
12. Newport Coast*	50	58.1*	0	-50	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>415.6 a</b>	<b>286.4</b>	<b>90.4 b</b>	<b>376.8</b>	<b>-38.8**</b>

\* Newport Coast includes public and private parks, including 14 acres of Newport Ridge park dedicated for public use upon City acceptance.

\*\*Private Park Area is 58.1 ac. Newport Coast parks use and maintenance are subject to the terms of the Pre-Annexation Agreement.

\*\*Deficit/excess acreage if no additional parks are built.

a 83,120 x 5 ac. per thousand = 415.6 ac.

b Includes beach area where active recreation takes place (i.e., typically within 100 feet of the water). In addition, there are 174 acres of passive beach open space, 136 acres of open space land in the Upper Bay Ecological reserve, and an undetermined amount of water open space in the Upper Bay and Newport Harbor.

### **Identified Issues and Needs**

**Service Area 1**—West Newport. Most of West Newport's recreation land is in beaches. There is a deficit of 21.6 acres, and a need for sports fields within a new community or neighborhood-level park. There is a future park site identified in this service area, Sunset Ridge Park which is designated as an active park to include ball fields, picnic areas, a playground, parking, and restrooms. Additionally, an active community park (possibly lighted) should be developed in Banning Ranch, regardless of the ultimate development of the site, to accommodate the Service Area and Citywide needs for active sports fields.

**Service Area 2**—Balboa Peninsula. Like West Newport, most of the peninsula's recreation area is in beaches. This area has little vacant land for development and the population is expected to remain stable. Although there is currently a surplus in park acreage, any future park needs can be satisfied via the renovation and upgrading of facilities, such as those at Las Arenas Park and Peninsula Park. Additional active park facilities are desirable, along with support facilities such as restrooms, showers, and drinking fountains. There is also a need for additional boat launching and mooring facilities, as well as pedestrian pathways to and along the Bay. Future development of the City's Marina Park property could provide for the existing community center and the City's current sailing and boating facilities on the site to be renovated and expanded.

**Service Area 3**—Newport Heights/Harbor Highlands. This area is largely built out and contains several important park and recreation facilities. Substantial school recreation facilities, including Newport Harbor High School, Ensign Junior High, Mariners Elementary, and Newport Heights Elementary, compensate for the deficiency in total park area.

**Service Area 4**—Santa Ana Heights/Airport Commercial. There is currently a park surplus, and the present two-acre Bayview Park and the proximity of the Upper Bay recreation area provide substantial recreational opportunities for this area. There is also a planned pocket park and the City is planning a joint use community center project with the YMCA and there is the possibility that the Caltrans site may be a future park location. However, this service area is experiencing a shortfall in active playfields. In addition, the population within this service area is expected to increase under the General Plan. Future development however will be subject to special provisions that require the provision of on-site recreational amenities, and dedication of land or payment of in-lieu fees.

**Service Area 5**—Lower Bay. This area contains Lido Isle and the Bayside Drive area and is largely built out. Although there is a deficiency in park area, the service area has substantial private recreational and boating facilities. It is also adjacent to Area 3 (Newport Heights) where there are extensive recreational facilities. Because of these factors and the fact there is little or no vacant land suitable for park use, the provision of additional parkland is probably not feasible in this area.

**Service Area 6**—Balboa Island. This area is similar, in terms of recreation needs and conditions with a deficiency in park area, to Area 5 above. However, Balboa Island contains more public recreational facilities in the form of public beach area, the Carroll Beek Community Center, and Balboa Island Park (a mini-park). The acquisition of additional parkland is probably not feasible in this area.

**Service Area 7**—Eastbluff/North Ford. Although there is a numerical excess of existing parkland in this area, most of the land is limited to passive use, such as Big Canyon Park. Additional sports fields and other active facilities will be needed to satisfy the recreational demands from new development.

- c. The preservation of natural resources, historic and cultural areas
- d. Ease of accessibility
- e. Usability of proposed parklands considering topography and other landform constraints
- f. Consistency with established parks and recreational facility Goal
- g. Fiscal impact on General Fund for any immediately needed refurbishments and on-going maintenance
- h. The existence of a deficiency in a particular Service Area *(Imp 23.1)*

**R 1.6 Surplus School Site Suitability**

In the event that surplus school sites become available for parkland acquisition, site desirability should be evaluated using the following criteria:

- a. Does the school site currently provide recreational facilities that have been identified to meet local or community-wide needs?
- b. Are other public lands in the vicinity of the school site inadequate to meet the identified existing or foreseeable needs of the community for recreation or open space purposes?
- c. Is the school site a more economical or otherwise more feasible alternative than other parcels which are available as potential sites in the area? *(Imp 23.1)*

**R 1.7 Private Parkland**

Coordinate with the appropriate home owners association to conduct City recreation programs on private parkland. *(Imp 39.2)*



*One Ford Road community park*

**R 1.8 Passive Parks**

Use underutilized City rights-of-way located on Ocean Boulevard and Bayside Drive in Corona del Mar as passive parks that are accessible for public use. *(Imp 23.1, 23.2)*

**R 1.9 Priority for Facility Provision**

Provide additional park and recreation facilities that meet the needs as identified by direct feedback from residents, analysis of future trends, and through observations by Recreation and Senior Services staff, as shown in Figure R2.

Parks

1. Newport Center Service Area: Develop Newport Center Park as a passive park
2. West Newport Service Area: Develop Sunset Ridge Park, an active park with playfields, picnic areas, a playground, and other facilities
3. Newport Coast Service Area: Develop an active park located at the end of Ridge Park Road; and develop a community center and a gymnasium
4. Santa Ana Heights/Airport Commercial Service Area: Develop a pocket park in Santa Ana Heights
5. West Newport Service Area: In the Banning ranch area develop an active community park of 20 to 30 acres with consideration of night lighting
6. Balboa Peninsula Service Area: Develop the Marina Park site for marine and/or recreational facilities

Recreation Facilities

1. Complete the Santa Ana Heights and Newport Coast Community Centers in a manner that allows the provision of a variety of recreational programs while meeting the needs of the community
2. Renovate the Oasis Senior Center to continue to function as a multipurpose senior center that meets the needs of the senior population
3. Renovate the existing recreation facilities to ensure they are a safe environment and offer quality programs and services (*Imp 23.1, 23.2*)

**R 1.10 Update of Priority for Facility Provision**

Review the list of identified community park and recreation needs on a regular basis, and update them as priorities for facilities change. (*Imp 23.1*)

**R 1.11 Update of Priority Usage**

Review policies regularly for priority usage of facilities to ensure fair and balanced assignments. Priority hierarchy shall be weighted for programs that are inclusive in nature and provide for the recreational enrichment of community's youth, adults, groups, and businesses. Scheduling shall be done in a manner that accommodates both the needs of organized activities as well as casual use by residents. Consideration shall also be given to the proper maintenance and revitalization of facilities when scheduling programs and activities. (*Imp 23.1*)

**R 1.12 Aircraft Overflight and Noise**

Require that all public parks located within the noise impact zones as defined in the 1985 JWA Master Plan for John Wayne Airport be posted with a notification to users regarding aircraft overflight and noise. (*Imp 23.2*)

Attachment

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# CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Minutes  
City Council Study Session  
March 25, 2008 -- 3:30 p.m.

## I. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Henn, Council Member Rosansky, Mayor Pro Tem Daigle, Mayor Selich, Council Member Webb, Council Member Curry, Council Member Gardner

## II. CURRENT BUSINESS

### 1. CLARIFICATION OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

In response to Council Member Henn's question regarding Item 9 (Marina Park), Public Works Director Badum stated that Marina Park is in the schematic design phase then will move into the design development phase and production of construction bid documents. Mayor Selich clarified that the footprint and square footages of the buildings will not change, only the height.

City Attorney Clauson asked that Item 3 (Kennels in West Santa Ana Heights) be continued to April 22 to allow for changes in the type of facility that will be operated.

### 2. PRESENTATION OF SUNSET RIDGE PARK CONCEPT PLAN. [73/100-2008]

Staff Report

Recreation and Senior Services Director Morgan reported that the General Plan called for Sunset Ridge Park to be an active park that contained an athletic field, restroom, parking lot, walkways, and vistas. He stated that he understands the residents concerns and that the preparation of the concept plan has been an open process.

Rick Vanderwood, EPT Design, utilized a PowerPoint presentation to display the existing conditions, site constraints, proposed site plan, a sectioned key map, and the overall plan.

In response to Council's questions, Recreation and Senior Services Director Morgan indicated that staff's position was to honor the General Plan and seek Council's direction. He stated that the standard size of a backstop is 30 feet, 13 - 14 year old children will play at the field, there will be no lights, and the parking lot will be locked at dusk.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Daigle's question, Mr. Vanderwood stated that the outfield fence will be four feet to contain balls and homeplate is about 500 feet from Pacific Coast Highway.

Council Member Rosansky stated that he understands the concerns of the residents; however, the General Plan called for the site to be an active park, and the City bought the property and legislature was passed with the understanding that the park would be active. He encouraged Council to visit the area and added that the field may need to be repositioned to another corner and only used for soccer, the 30 foot backdrop may need to be eliminated, or the City may need to do away with the 13-14 year old age group playing at the park. Recreation and Senior Services Director Morgan stated that there is a need for recreation fields for all age groups, but the 13-14 year old age group can be accommodated elsewhere.

Lantz Bell, Newport Harbor Baseball Association Vice President, stated that the

association's biggest need right now is for the 13-14 year old division since there are 17 teams.

In response to Council's questions, Mr. Bell stated that the equipment at Ensign is inadequate, the outfield is awkward, and the field should be used only for practices. He indicated that Bob Henry Park is currently being used for 10 year olds. He suggested changing the backstop on the concept plan by running a net along home plate for safety.

Tom Greeley expressed support for the project. He suggested that Council ensure a safe crossing at Pacific Coast Highway and Superior Avenue.

Dr. Jay Westphal indicated that he is impressed with how Council and the community are working together. He questioned the maintenance of the trees and expressed his concern for pedestrian traffic and safety, and privacy for the residents of Newport Crest.

Ginny Lombardi extended an invitation to Council to visit her home. She expressed concern that there is no buffer zone, road, distance, or soundwall between the park and residents. She noted that the General Plan can be amended and the decisions were made prior to community outreach.

Kristi Flusfleg expressed concern about the obstruction of views, the tot lot, noise, and park hours. She urged Council to conduct an accident analysis on Pacific Coast Highway and questioned the parking demands and how it is monitored. She asked Council to conduct a proper analysis of other fields in the City that could be used for sports.

Jeff Braun, Commissioner of AYSO Region 97, stated that there are 1,000 children in the Newport Beach region who participate in soccer, but there are only two soccer fields in the City. He noted that soccer games are usually scheduled Monday through Friday from 4:00 p.m. to dusk, and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Freid Ganem expressed concern about park access, parking, safety, and hours of operation.

Robert Orbe commended the design but questioned why the existing parking lot is not used in the concept plan. He suggested that the field be moved closer to Pacific Coast Highway.

Steve Porter expressed his concern about parking, safety, traffic, and the removal of the soundwall.

In response to Mayor Selich's question, Public Works Director Badum stated that the traffic signals at the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Superior are currently controlled by Caltrans.

Fred Cornwell, President of the Newport Harbor Baseball Association, stated that they have a need for an active field and agreed adjustments can be made to the backstop, since the netting to the backdrop can be adjusted according to conditions. He also stated that parking is not an issue because each game consists of 24 children, which allows for plenty of parking for parents and spectators.

Jane Drew expressed concern about noise and safety. She stated that she knows that there is a need for active parks, but believed that Sunset Ridge Park should be a passive park.

Gloria Quirk expressed concern about the proximity of the park to Pacific Coast Highway and Superior Avenue.

Byron Dearicle, Soccer Families 4 Newport Fields, expressed support for the concept plan and believed that Council should respect that the area is dedicated as an active park. He stated that the demand for youth soccer is growing in the City.

Tom Anderson, Newport-Mesa Soccer Club, gave statistics on soccer and stated that he is an

advocate of active parks because there is a need for fields for the adolescents in the City.

Brian Huld expressed concern about noise and dust. He suggested that the City purchase some of the land in the Banning Ranch area.

Elizabeth Farisfurd thanked Council and the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission for acquiring Sunset Ridge Park. She encouraged Council to dedicate a memorial at the park to Louise Greeley.

Jim Caras urged Council to consider another location for the field due to safety and legal liability to the City and stated that there is too much need in such a small space.

Kristine Adams expressed concern about the obstruction of views, noise, size of the land, parking issues, and the closeness of the fields to existing homes. She believed that most residents did not get a full understanding of what an active park entails.

Dr. Jan Vandersloot requested that there be native landscaping on the bluffs and slopes, and asked Council to consider utilizing Banning Ranch for sports fields instead.

Waldemar Moosman expressed concern about the parking and removal of existing plants and flowers. He believed that Sunset Ridge was previously planned to be a passive park and claimed that residents had no communication with Council Member Rosansky.

Mike Lombardi expressed his concern about the noise impact and the proximity of the fields to the buildings. He also suggested that there be a buffer zone and that the parking area be moved.

Matt Irwin asked Council to visit the area before making a decision because the park will take away the views of the Bay.

Council Member Rosansky stated that Council will be sensitive about the height of the trees and stated that research was done to ensure that there is enough parking. He indicated that, if the final decision is made to have a field, staff will portion out the field between soccer and baseball and figure out which one will be better for the area. He informed the residents that the land in the parking area near the entrance is owned by Banning Ranch who will not sell or give the area away. He assured residents that staff will work with Caltrans to make the intersection as safe as possible and trails have been created for people to access the park. He indicated that they will look at using artificial turf for dust and maintenance reasons. He emphasized that he has had a significant amount of contact with residents and has visited homes in the area.

In response to Council Member Gardner's question, Recreation and Senior Services Director Morgan stated that the draft concept suggested removing the soundwall and replacing it with mounding and berms, which is more effective than a soundwall.

Council Member Henn stated that he relied on staff and experts to make estimates regarding parking and encouraged the concept planners to discourage access to Newport Crest. He suggested that the Parks and Recreation Department do a strategic review of the active parks used for baseball, to determine how their use could be rebalanced to accommodate 13-14 year old baseball, and what enhancements would be recommended to allow for that. He suggested that staff explore enhancing pedestrian safety at the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Superior, look into retractable backstops, and work to reduce noise.

Council Member Curry believed that the park is an excellent idea and supported the suggestions relative to tree heights. He stated that he wants to ensure that parking issues are not created and suggested that staff look at technological options for the field.

Council Member Webb pointed out the wall between Newport Crest and the park is consistent and tall enough to discourage people from hopping over and that the park is set up to only have one game at a time to allow for parking. He noted that Banning Ranch is not a guarantee and that this project cannot be delayed.

Mayor Pro Tem Daigle stated that Council can accommodate some changes and asked that staff continue with public outreach. She noted that there are new wall treatments and additional methods to explore.

Mayor Selich stated that Sunset Ridge Park is needed and most concerns can be worked out by redesigning the park. He expressed concern about losing the baseball field and urged staff to change the backstop to minimize the view impact.

Recreation and Senior Services Director Morgan stated that the concept plan will be reviewed by the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Committee and come back during a Study Session. He assured Council that they will take the issues that were brought forward into consideration.

3. **TRAFFIC SIGNAL MODERNIZATION MASTER PLAN - PEER REVIEW BY JOE FAUST. [100-2008]**

Staff Report

Joe Faust reported that the new traffic modernization system is justified and needed. He assured Council that the Econolite system is reliable and reported that the manufacturer of the equipment is local. To further improve traffic, he suggested that the City use surveillance or a closed circuit television system to improve delays and performance. He also suggested that the City use a fiber optic system, conduct before and after evaluations of the traffic, and scale the project to less phases.

In response to Council's questions, Mr. Faust stated that the traffic signal modernization performance testing should produce a 3% to 5% overall improvement. He discussed the importance of the timing pattern and how surveillance will provide a big picture to help simulate traffic flows. He suggested that the City go from T1 to T3 wires or a fiber optic system and explained the difference between a traffic responsive system and an adaptive system. He believed that, in terms of traffic, the adaptive system is more effective but requires a lot of maintenance, staff time, and funding.

In response to City Manager Bludau's question, Public Works Director Badum stated that staff looked at the corridors and tried to phase the intersections accordingly. He noted that Pacific Coast Highway is a missing section because it is owned by Caltrans, but he is currently working with them in order to control the signals.

Council Member Rosansky emphasized that traffic is one of the main concerns in the City and agreed with Mr. Faust that there needs to be less phases.

In response to Council's questions, Public Works Director Badum stated that adding more surveillance cameras in Phases Two and Three can be accomplished.

Council Member Henn emphasized the need for the surveillance cameras and indicated that there needs to be a full understanding of the system in the early phases to be able to learn and modify during later phases. He requested that the prioritization of all phases after Phase III be reviewed and approved by Council, and that the criteria for later phases include measures of congestion, safety and emergency access, in addition to traffic volume.

Mayor Selich reminded Council that, as part of the General Plan, intersection improvements and traffic synchronization might help the critical intersections.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

IV. ADJOURNMENT - 6:15 p.m.

The agenda for the Study Session was posted on March 19, 2008, at 4:00 p.m. on the City Hall Bulletin Board located outside of the City of Newport Beach Administration Building.

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Recording Secretary

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Mayor

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City Clerk



# PARKS, BEACHES & RECREATION COMMISSION

## SPECIAL MEETING - SUNSET RIDGE

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008 - 6:30pm

City Council Chambers - 3300 Newport Boulevard

The PB&R Commission will hold a Special Meeting on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 at 6:30pm to consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding the UPDATED concept plan for Sunset Ridge Park.

*Updated  
Draft Concept  
Plan*

