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**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
on the Parks Master Recreation Improvement Plan Planning Process**

Meeting Minutes

**September 12, 2024
12:30 p.m.**

Location: Council Chamber, 1st floor, City Hall

In attendance: Council President White; Council Vice President Carrico; Council Members Salem, Boylan, Amaro, Gay, Peluso, J. Carlucci and Clark-Murray

Also: Mary Staffopoulos, Office of General Counsel; Phillip Peterson, Council Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Meeting Convened: 12:31 p.m.

Council President White convened the meeting and called for introductions. Daryl Joseph, Parks Director, provided a brief overview of the master plan process. He said the plan will focus on recreational equity, community input and resiliency.

Parks Master Recreation Improvement Plan

Kristin Caborn, GAI Consultants, gave a presentation about the master plan draft and community survey results. She talked about creating a 10-year vision for the parks system with equitable improvements and maintenance. Ms. Caborn spoke about parks as a tool for flood and heat mitigation. Our park system includes 405 parks and is the largest in the country with almost 37,000 acres. Ms. Caborn talked about 10-minute walk initiative for park proximity to residents. She reviewed the master plan process, which examined existing conditions and gathered input from the public through surveys and community meetings.

In creating the master plan, the county development areas were used as a framework with consideration of population density. Ms. Caborn described the 177 neighborhood parks, between 1-20 acres, that provide close-to-home park services with basic recreational amenities. She talked about the 93 community parks that are larger, 20-50 acres, and serve a larger population with passive and active amenities. She talked about the 16 regional parks that serve the largest geographic area and include all the amenities of

Neighborhood Parks plus additional passive and active recreation including lit fields/sport courts, parking, and restrooms. Ms. Caborn spoke about the master plan's themes: resilience, equity and quality. She listed the goals of the plan to improve access to parks, equitably improve existing parks, provide equitable access to amenities, develop resilience improvements and follow a blueprint for future enhancements.

Survey results

Ms. Caborn shared the results from the parks survey intended to gather resident feedback on parks and recreation facilities and amenities. She described the methodology, with an invitation survey via mail with 745 completed surveys, and an open link survey with 1585 completed surveys. The data from the Invite survey were weighted by age and gender to ensure appropriate representation using US Census data. Responses were received from all Council Districts, with a slightly larger share from Districts 13 and 7. According to the survey results regarding usage: Parks are by far the most frequently used amenity with 60% saying they visit at least monthly; Trails/Riverwalk are next with about half visiting at least once per month; Respondents were least likely to play golf, tennis or swim at a City facility; With the exception of restrooms, indoor facilities are used by far fewer respondents than the outdoor amenities in the parks system.

According to the survey results regarding satisfaction: 48% of Invite respondents rated their overall satisfaction with the quality as a 4 or 5 and just 18% said 1 or 2; 54% rated the physical condition of parks facilities as good or excellent.

According to the survey results regarding recommended changes: Improved maintenance of facilities is the top change staff can make to encourage more visits; almost 9 in 10 respondents rate increasing natural areas and improving existing parks facilities as important priorities. 82% want to see additional trails and 73% want more parks added in the city.

Ms. Caborn said the survey results will be incorporated into the master plan, which will also have recommendations for future appropriations.

Q/A

Council Member Salem asked about riverfront parks, which are part of the downtown park master plan. Council Member Boylan asked about maintenance, vandalism and security cameras. Ms. Caborn said that increasing "normal" usage acts as more of a crime deterrent than cameras.

Council President White asked about future development in rural areas and whether those changes in density had been considered.

Council Member Peluso asked about other cities that spend more on parks and have larger park staffs. He talked about park conditions, particularly restrooms, improved signage, and land conservation. He asked Mr. Joseph for data on the shared use path usage.

Council Member Joe Carlucci asked about district specific results from the survey, and about a comparison from previous surveys.

Council Member Boylan asked to see a copy of the survey questionnaire.

Council Member Peluso asked why the survey didn't ask about specific parks.

Council President White suggested incorporating a question in a future survey about security residing onsite at park facilities.

Council Member Amaro emphasized the importance of maintenance standards in all parks.

With no further business, CP White adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 1:37 p.m.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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