Options and Opportunities: New Management Paradigms for Balboa Park

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December 2007

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Printed in the United States of America.

Background

Balboa Park occupies 1200 acres in the City of San Diego, California and is among the nation's largest urban cultural parks. Its cultural features, which include fifteen major museums, several performing arts venues, gardens, and the San Diego Zoo, attract almost 14 million visitors annually. In addition to its cultural attributes, the Park provides numerous recreational amenities including golf, tennis, swimming, and other indoor and outdoor sports in addition to play areas and picnic facilities. The Park is administered by the City of San Diego through the Parks and Recreation Department and policy guidance is provided by the San Diego Park & Recreation Board and the Balboa Park Committee. Funding for the Park is provided through the city's general fund, various enterprise funds, Transit Occupancy Taxes, state bond funds, and private organizations.

The Legler Benbough, The Parker Foundation, and the San Diego Foundation (The Foundations) have been major contributors to the Park and its institutions for many years, and they have a longstanding interest in efforts to address the Park's deferred maintenance and unfunded capital improvements. The Foundations requested the Keston Institute for Public Finance and Infrastructure Policy at the University of Southern California to prepare this background paper to present an overview of funding and management options for the improvement and maintenance of Balboa Park and possible models for their implementation. The report was to identify and discuss potential options for leveraging available city funding for the park including alternative governance options and involvement of the private sector. This report presents the results of that effort, discusses various options to enhance investment in the physical assets of Balboa Park and their potential policy implications, but does not offer any specific recommendations for action.

Findings and Conclusions

The administration, funding, and financial structure of Balboa Park have not met maintenance requirements or provided significant new investment or improvements.

Past funding of the Park, the number and cost of approved but unfunded projects, and the current, well-publicized financial difficulties of the City of San Diego strongly suggest that the City is unlikely to be able to appropriately maintain and make necessary future investments in the Park as it is presently organized and funded,

A long-term solution for Balboa Park must holistically address the linked issues of governance, planning, and finance.

The development of recommendations for the Park's governance and administration is a critical first step in the review process. Whether based on a more centralized and accountable form of public administration, a public-private partnership, or some other model, the implementation of a comprehensive and transparent system of governance that provides improved efficiency, creditworthiness, and accountability will be necessary to attract increased investment.

- Governance decisions will determine the framework of Park administration and define a revitalized planning process.

- The planning process must embrace all stakeholders, generate a clear vision for the future, and produce a product that allows for effective park leadership and decision-making.
- Financial stability—including increased revenues for maintenance and new investment—can be achieved only when the public is satisfied that a functional and efficient governance structure and a visionary yet achievable plan are in place.

Subsequent to the implementation of governance decisions, improved planning and an effective framework for identifying and allocating funds—a vital, coherent Master Plan and a realistic Capital Improvements Program—are absolutely necessary for effective Park management.

- The ultimate governing entity for Balboa Park, in conjunction with the Park's many stakeholders, needs to reexamine the Park Master Plan for Park to determine if it remains feasible under current and anticipated financial circumstances and that it includes a clear vision for the future.
- A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) should prioritize needs and identify specific potential revenue sources and pragmatic strategies for their effective use. An updated CIP that identifies needs and potential sources of funding and sets clear priorities for park development is long overdue. Options for raising new revenue or strategies for investment will depend upon the governance structures adopted.

Fiscal Conditions in San Diego

The City of San Diego has been under fiscal stress for many years. As a result, services or projects not deemed essential have been funded at reduced levels or not at all. Despite an aggressive program of organizational streamlining and Business Process Re-engineering begun in 2006, the City's fiscal condition is expected to remain guarded for years to come. This is likely to have several limiting effects on the availability of City funding for Balboa Park. First, general fund revenues will probably not be adequate to make noticeable inroads into the maintenance and repair (M&R) backlog. Second, even when the City's fiscal condition improves to the point where it will be feasible to re-enter the municipal debt market, there is no guarantee that voters will approve bonds in the amounts and on the schedules necessary either to address the M&R backlog or fund capital improvements. Recent City experience with tax measure initiatives has indicated reluctance on the part of voters to increase current taxes or approve new revenue sources. Finally, there is considerable anecdotal evidence that private donors or foundations that might be predisposed to contributing financially to the Park have been hesitant to do so out of concern that funds donated to the City for park purposes could be reallocated to other programs. This concern could also spill over and affect the willingness of voters to approve new funding mechanisms or dedicated funding sources for the Park. Whether this concern is justified is irrelevant. If it has the potential to cause donations to be withheld or dedicated tax measures to be defeated, it becomes a *de facto* reality that must be addressed together with any discussion of alternative models for governance or finance.

San Diego is not unique in being constrained from addressing the fiscal needs of its iconic park resources. New York City, St. Louis, Atlanta, and Houston among other U.S. cities have all faced similar challenges and although the unreliability of funding was a factor in all cases, the issue of how the Parks were managed and funds raised, allocated, and spent (i.e., governance) were equally important. For this reason, governance and finance issues and options associated with Balboa Park will be discussed separately

The Master Plan and Capital Improvements Program

Before increased revenues and alternative funding models for Balboa Park can be identified and cultivated, a framework for identifying and allocating how funds will be raised and spent must be developed. This framework consists of two distinct but equally important parts, the **Master Plan** and the **Capital Improvements Program** or CIP. The Master Plan translates the goals and objectives for the Park into the physical manifestation of the various elements necessary to achieve those goals. Master Plans are typically long-range documents, often covering periods of 10 to 20 years. However, they frequently lack discussion of implementation mechanisms. The CIP addresses implementation, identifying capital projects (new constructions and major repair and renovation), sequencing the projects over a multi-year planning horizon (typically 4-6 years), and describing options for financing.

The park master planning process varies by jurisdiction but generally the Master Plan provides a basis for decision making regarding the management, development, and use of the Park. It generally consists of a management element which establishes the purpose(s) of the Park, describes existing conditions and constraints, and details the desired visitor experience and how to manage visitation. It also includes a Development Plan that serves as a blueprint for development and describes the planned park elements, identifies design concerns, and illustrates the general location of existing and proposed facilities.

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) identifies how the Master Plan will be implemented, prioritizes projects, and projects cumulative cash requirements for capital improvements, maintenance and repair, and operations for the multi-year planning period. It identifies the sources of revenue over a period of time, and provides the longer term view necessary to match expected revenue to projected needs. The CIP is not a "wish list." To the contrary, it is the mechanism that links the desired and the possible. A typical CIP process is shown in Figure 1.

The context and purpose of every park is unique and constantly changing, as are its challenges and problems. As a result, the master planning process must be dynamic, allowing for flexibility as situations and circumstances change. Periodically, the master plan must be reviewed to determine if it continues to meet the needs of the City and its citizens. This includes reassessing the overall goals and the feasibility of achieving those goals. This requires an evaluation the condition of built facilities, and an examination of the long range vision for the Park and its role in the community. Such comprehensive reviews should occur at least every 10-15 years but could occur sooner if circumstances warrant. The Master Plan can be inspired and can set forth ambitious goals, but at the same time it should be within the realm of the possible and in line with the expectations based on the parameters of the CIP. If it is not, it becomes superfluous. Consequently, a major review and revision of the master plan should follow basic decisions about administration and financing.

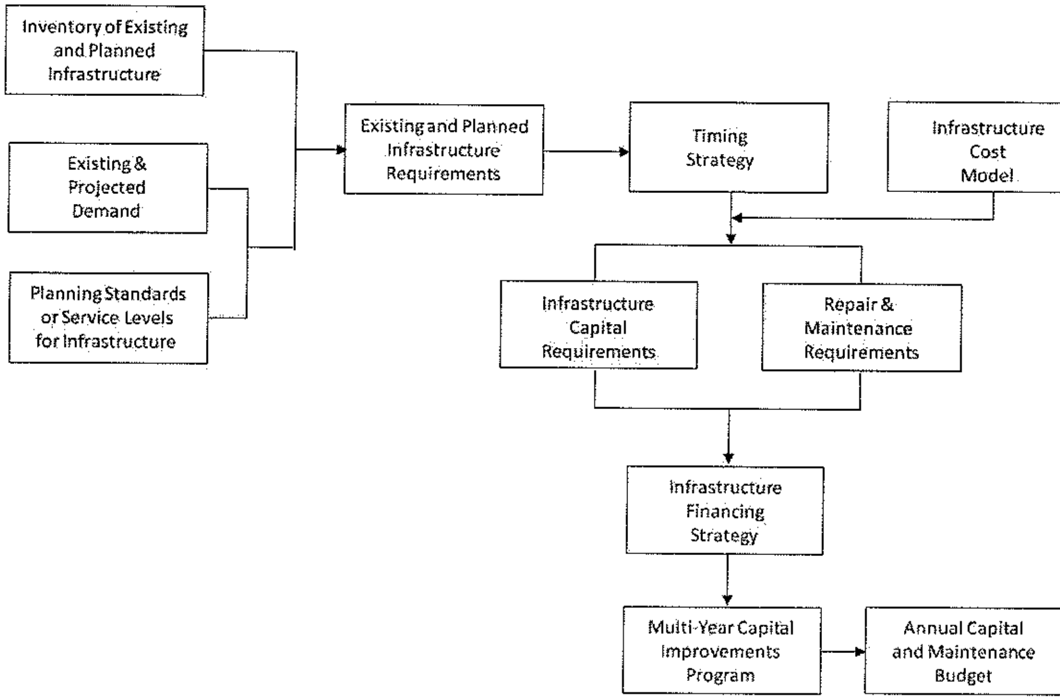

Figure 1: Typical Capital Improvement Plan Development Process

Major Sources of Park Funding

Capital improvements in public parks are typically funded from a combination of sources including direct transfers from the general fund, sales and special taxes, enterprise revenues from admission fees, ground rents, vendor concessions, parking, etc., grants from the state and federal governments, and private foundations, and general obligation and revenue bonds. The Capital Improvements Program developed as part of the City of San Diego Fiscal Year 2008 Proposed Budget lists more than 12 separate funding sources for Balboa Park capital improvements, some of which are shown in Table 1. For many projects, no source of funding was identified in the CIP. The need to tap into so many different funds to complete projects is indicative of the fundamental weakness of Balboa Park's finances. Simply put, the City is unable to reliably connect needs and revenues on a multi-year basis to address the unfunded backlog of maintenance and repair and other capital improvements at Balboa Park.

The obvious solution to inadequate funding is some combination of increased revenues and reduced expectations and expenditures. According to a press account, the city has identified \$102 million in unfunded repairs and an additional \$157 million to complete priority projects in the Park's master plan.[1] Needs this massive can only be addressed through a robust mix of master planning, capital improvement programming, and budgeting which can separate that which is truly needed from what is merely desirable and prioritize, schedule, and finance the

[1] "Park model could work for Balboa, official says," by Jeanette Steele, *San Diego-Union Tribune*, June 21, 2007.

work. On the revenue side, the question becomes how many options reasonably exist to raise funds needed to complete this work or to secure additional partners to participate financially in park activities.

Balboa Park Historical Project California Tower
Balboa Park Historical Project Casa Del Prado
Balboa Park Historical Project Museum of Art
Capital Outlay Fund/Sales Tax
Contributions from 100 Fund
Golf Enterprise Funds
Infrastructure Improvements Fund
Mission Bay Revenues
Private Donations
Public/Private Partnership
Regional Parks Infrastructure Fund
Transient Occupancy Tax

Table 1. Multiple Funding Sources for Balboa Park Capital Projects
(source: City of San Diego Fiscal Year 2008 Proposed Budget)

This report does not make any attempt to determine how much of the pending capital projects are required or to make recommendations for prioritizing them. However, for discussion purposes, it is certainly arguable that the lower bound of capital improvements over the next ten years would be in the neighborhood of $150 million to $300 million. Therefore, over 10 years, the capital needs of Balboa Park are on the order of $15-$30 million annually. This is certainly a conservative range as it does not include revenue needed for maintenance and operations, or underlying infrastructure needs such as water and sewer system improvements.

There are three primary ways to finance major capital improvements through the public sector:

- "Pay as you go" – current revenues from sales and other taxes, general revenue, and user fees
- Debt – selling bonds or notes backed by "full faith and credit" of government, including property taxes (general obligation bonds), or by user fees and other revenue streams (revenue bonds)
- Intergovernmental transfers – grants from one level of government to another

Table 2 summarizes potential funding sources for a Balboa Park capital improvements program. In light of the magnitude of funding required, debt financing would normally be the method of choice to attack Balboa Park's capital requirements. However, given the poor credit rating and high existing debt of the City, pay-as-you-go funding may be the necessary choice unless park governance and administration is significantly altered.

In any case, significant new revenue streams in the form of new taxes or user fees will be required to address the Park's capital investment backlog. To the extent that grants in aid or private donations can offset some of the costs, these sources should certainly be utilized, and there are various ways in which nonprofit entities can be integrated into park management and decision-making to facilitate this. Another possibility is to develop Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), wherein the private sector agrees to provide certain services that can offset some operations and capital costs.

Alternative Public Sector Park Administration

The creation of new, independent governmental entities, including special districts or authorities (including joint powers authorities), has been a major strategy for public financing and management of parks in California and throughout the country. They are particularly popular for regional park systems in metropolitan areas that encompass multiple jurisdictions or unincorporated areas, but they can also operate as independent agencies separate from but corresponding with a single city or county. While Balboa Park is owned and operated directly by the City of San Diego now, there is a good case to be made that other jurisdictions that benefit from the Park should contribute to its funding and should also take some responsibility for its administration and management. According to survey of 2000 park users, about 25% of park users are from the City of San Diego, 45% are from San Diego County outside the City, 11% are from elsewhere in California, 15% are from States outside of California and 4% are from outside of the United States.[2] Visitation statistics are just one indication of Balboa Park's role as a major public asset—the benefits of its improvement and maintenance will accrue to the residents of the entire region through tourism, property value increases, and various environmental and health benefits.

The creation of a new, independent entity would allow for the incorporation of a broader set of stakeholders into the decision-making process for the Park, broaden its funding base, and facilitate the improvement of park administration. Currently, Balboa Park is administered by the San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation as one of many local and regional parks and other recreational facilities. The responsibility for different aspects of park administration and infrastructure stewardship are assigned to a number of different departments and entities. The complexity of this administrative structure leads to opaque accounting, redundancy, and management responsibilities that often overlap or fail to address an issue at all. This complexity hinders clear accountability, coordination within the park, the development and implementation of plans and priorities, and operational efficiency. Consolidation of its administration into a single-purpose entity would centralize management for efficacy and accountability and help improve transparency. It could also increase the confidence of potential benefactors and voters that increased funding for Balboa Park would be used effectively and efficiently.

The California Public Resources Code provides for the creation of locally-controlled **Recreation and Park Districts** by one or more cities or counties.[3] A park district would be an independent entity with its own appointed or elected directors who would represent San Diego as well as surrounding areas. Such an agency would consolidate and simplify the administration of Balboa Park, and facilitate improved relationships with community groups and benefactors. Traditionally, park districts are funded with special property taxes levied by benefit assessment

[2] [Numbers based on Benbough Foundation survey]

[3] *Parks, Progress, and Public Policy: A Legislative History of Senate Bill 707 and the 'Recreation and Parks District Law'* California Senate Committee on Local Government, 2001.

districts that require the approval of two-thirds of property owners which is often difficult to achieve.

When multiple government jurisdictions are involved, another possible way to create a new public agency in California is to incorporate a **Joint Powers Authority** (JPA), as was done for the development of the San Dieguito River Park[4]. JPAs have been used for a wide variety of public purposes in California, though their adaptation for parks is relatively new. They can be created though the voluntary agreement of existing governmental entities under the California Joint Exercise of Powers Act. This law allows the founding agencies to endow a new agency with some of the powers that they have at their discretion, establishing provisions for its governance and deciding its functional limits in the process. A JPA is a separate and independent entity with is own board of directors to be appointed as agreed by its creators. Once a JPA is incorporated, it can employ staff, enter into contracts, own property, and establish policies independently of the founding government agencies. A JPA can help foster intergovernmental cooperation and can sometimes benefit from the support of multiple constituencies. If such an agency is created through an agreement with the City and County of San Diego, it can be expected that both entities would contribute funds for its capital programs and operations.

A park district or JPA could improve park management and administration by centralizing decision-making, allowing for more effective planning, empowering an experienced executive, and encouraging greater accountability. These agencies are eligible for the same governmental grants and subsidies as city park departments. A JPA would also have the important advantage of being able to issue revenue bonds based on its own credit profile as an independent agency, absolving the city from potential debt burdens and facilitating the financing of capital improvements. Under this sort of management, park administration would remain public. But like other governmental agencies, these entities can make contracts and form partnerships with the private sector.

There are many examples of independent public agencies operating major park systems throughout the country that have characteristics similar to a JPA or a recreation and park district, including the Chicago Park District, Philadelphia's Fairmount Park Commission, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Oakland's East Bay Regional Park District.

Nonprofit Groups and Public Parks

In response to funding shortfalls and other failings of municipal park management, nonprofit groups are increasingly becoming involved as co-managers of a single park or entire urban systems. These groups work with the local parks department in a number of ways, from jointly sharing oversight of planning, design, and construction and maintenance, to providing staff and funds for these functions, to taking over full responsibility for management and operations of the Park. The Central Park Conservancy in New York is perhaps the best known model in the U.S.

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[4] The San Dieguito River Park Joint Powers Authority was formed as a separate agency on June 12, 1989, by the County of San Diego and the Cities of Del Mar, Escondido, Poway, San Diego and Solana Beach. It was empowered to acquire, plan, design, improve, operate and maintain the San Dieguito River Park.

for nonprofit co-management[5] while The Bryant Park Corporation, also in New York is an example of a private management model.

With the exception of the ability to tax, the funding of nonprofit park organizations mirrors in many ways that of the public parks organization. In addition to direct governmental transfers or subsidies, these sources include private donations, foundation grants, operating concessions, and interest from investment or endowments. The report *Public Parks, Private Partners*, developed by the New York-based Project for Public Spaces, Inc., lists local foundations, and private individuals and corporations as the most likely and primary sources of funding for nonprofit park management organization. These groups typically operate in a tax-exempt status under Section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Probably the most famous example of successful nonprofit urban park management in the United States is New York City's Central Park Conservancy. The Conservancy has contributed more than $450 million dollars since 1980 to revitalize the historic park, and began participating directly in its management in 1997. The City of New York contracts park maintenance to the Conservancy for an annual fee, and the Conservancy works in collaboration with the city in planning, contracting, and investment decisions. Similar relationships have been developed in urban parks throughout the country in recent years, many of them based on the Central Park model. They include Forest Park in St. Louis, Missouri, Hermann Park in Houston, Texas, and Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York.

Public Private Partnerships

Public Private Partnerships (PPP) have received increasing attention in the U.S. as a means of procuring services traditionally provided by the public sector. A PPP is a contractual agreement between a public agency (federal, state or local) and a private sector entity that can be drafted to insure that specific public concerns are addressed and that restrictions are placed on the private partner to be sure that the public interest is served and protected. Through this agreement, the skills and assets of each sector (public and private) are shared in delivering a service or facility for the use of the general public. In addition to the sharing of resources, each party shares in the risks and rewards potential in the delivery of the service and/or facility.[6]

There are a range of models for public-private partnerships that progressively engage the expertise or capital of the private sector. "Contracting out" represents one end, where the private sector delivers traditional public services. At the other end, there are arrangements that are publicly administered but within a framework that allows for private finance, design, building, operation and possibly temporary ownership of an asset. Public-private partnerships are not "privatization" which is the case when a specific function is turned over to the private sector and the public sector is responsible only for regulatory control.

For example, several municipalities across the country (including cities in California) have contracted out golf course operations to the private sector with reported cost savings and

[5] *Public Parks, Private Partners.* Project for Public Spaces, Inc. 2000.
[6] National Council on Public Private Partnerships. http://ncppp.org/howpart/index.shtml#define. [November 16, 2007]

improvements in operations.[7] Los Angeles contracts 16 out of 19 courses and of these 16 courses, nine are leased to small firms or groups of individuals (mostly local golf pros) and the other seven to larger management firms. Detroit and New York have also leased out municipal course primarily because of their financial inability to make capital improvements. Improvements in course conditions have been reported and in these cities no municipal workers lost employment. They were either hired by the contractor or transferred to other city positions.

Terms of Reference

The following terms refer to commonly used partnership agreements although this list is not exhaustive[8]:

> *Design-Build (DB):* The private sector designs and builds infrastructure to meet public sector performance specifications, often for a fixed price, so the risk of cost overruns is transferred to the private sector. (Many do not consider DB's to be within the spectrum of P3's).
>
> *Operation & Maintenance Contract (O & M):* A private operator, under contract, operates a publicly-owned asset for a specified term. Ownership of the asset remains with the public entity.
>
> *Design-Build-Finance-Operate (DBFO):* The private sector designs, finances and constructs a new facility under a long-term lease, and operates the facility during the term of the lease. The private partner transfers the new facility to the public sector at the end of the lease term.
>
> *Build-Own-Operate (BOO):* The private sector finances, builds, owns and operates a facility or service in perpetuity. The public constraints are stated in the original agreement and through on-going regulatory authority.
>
> *Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT):* A private entity receives a franchise to finance, design, build and operate a facility (and to charge user fees) for a specified period, after which ownership is transferred back to the public sector.
>
> *Buy-Build-Operate (BBO):* Transfer of a public asset to a private or quasi-public entity usually under contract that the assets are to be upgraded and operated for a specified period of time. Public control is exercised through the contract at the time of transfer.
>
> *Finance Only:* A private entity, usually a financial services company, funds a project directly or uses various mechanisms such as a long-term lease or bond issue.
>
> *Concession Agreement:* An agreement between a government and a private entity which grants the private entity the right to operate and maintain a publicly-owned asset in exchange for a fee. Although ownership usually does not transfer, certain rights of ownership may.

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[7] Segal, G.F., A.B. Summers, L.C. Gilroy, and W.E. Bruvold. *Streamlining San Diego: Achieving Taxpayer Savings and Government Reforms Through Managed Competition.* San Diego Institute for Policy Research and Reason Foundation. September 2007.

[8] The Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships. http://www.pppcouncil.ca/aboutPPP_definition.asp. [November 16, 2007].

Source of Funds	Advantages	Disadvantages
REVENUE SOURCES AMENABLE TO CONTINUED CITY ADMINISTRATION		
Sales Tax	Potential to raise significant revenue (½¢ ~ $8 million); collection mechanism already in place	Would require voter approval; resistance to tax increases
Transient Occupancy Tax	Potential to raise significant revenue (1¢ ~ $8 million); collection mechanism already in place	Would require voter approval; resistance to tax increases
Development Exactions	Would engage selected private development such as commercial and multi-use projects in the City in support of an urban resource that conveys broad benefit; could produce in-kind as opposed to cash contributions	Park projects would be in competition with other needed improvements
General Obligation Bonds	Potential to produce significant capital to undertake a program of the magnitude needed ($8 million per year could pay debt service for an $80 million bond issue)	Would require voter approval of GO bonds; City debt is poorly rated – The most recent General Obligation Bond ratings (as of March, 2007) • Moody's Investors Service: A3 Negative Outlook • Fitch Ratings: BBB+ Rating Watch Negative • Standard & Poor's: Suspended, Negative Credit Watch
REVENUE SOURCES AMENABLE TO OTHER PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION		
Revenue Bonds/User Fees	Would directly engage users of the Park in its upkeep and repair; creation of public authority or special district increases accountability, centralized park administration and allows for greater public sector initiative and flexibility	Requires significant oversight and monitoring by competent and adequately empowered public authorities. Transparency and accountability vital.
Special Assessments	Would spread costs of improvements over broad base of beneficiaries	Requires 2/3 voter approval; 1¢ ~ $3 million for the City
REVENUE SOURCES AMENABLE TO PRIVATE SECTOR ADMINISTRATION		
Grants and Donations/Non-profit Administration	Does not impact City finances; willing and engaged donor community; encouraged by shift to non-profit administration or partnership.	Limitations of types of projects that can be undertaken; reluctance to entrust City with resources targeted to Balboa Park with current park management structure in place
Public-Private Partnerships	Could move certain functions off City books while still providing services (golf, parking)	Services provided by a private sector entity will charge fees that provide full cost recovery and return on investment

Table 2. Possible options to fund a Balboa Park Capital Improvements Program

Table 3 presents financial information for some of the California conversions.

Descriptive Information			Revenue		
Course Name	**City**	**Last Year Public**	**Public Operation**	**Private Operation (first year)**	**1995-96 Fiscal Year**
El Dorado	Long Beach	FY/83	(68,918)	201,087	609,714
La Mirada Golf Course	Los Angeles	FY/81	155,547	182,558	1,006,537
Los Verdes	Los Angeles	FY/81	94,553	56,412	1,187,307
Mountain Meadow	Los Angeles	FY/88	569,233	708,704	1,407,377
Rec Park 18	Long Beach	FY/83	126,249	201,087	690,532
Rec Park 9	Long Beach	FY/83	24,403	67,029	187,155

Table 3. Revenue Comparison for Selected Golf Course Conversions

Figure 2 depicts how the level of private sector involvement and risk vary for different type of partnering arrangements.

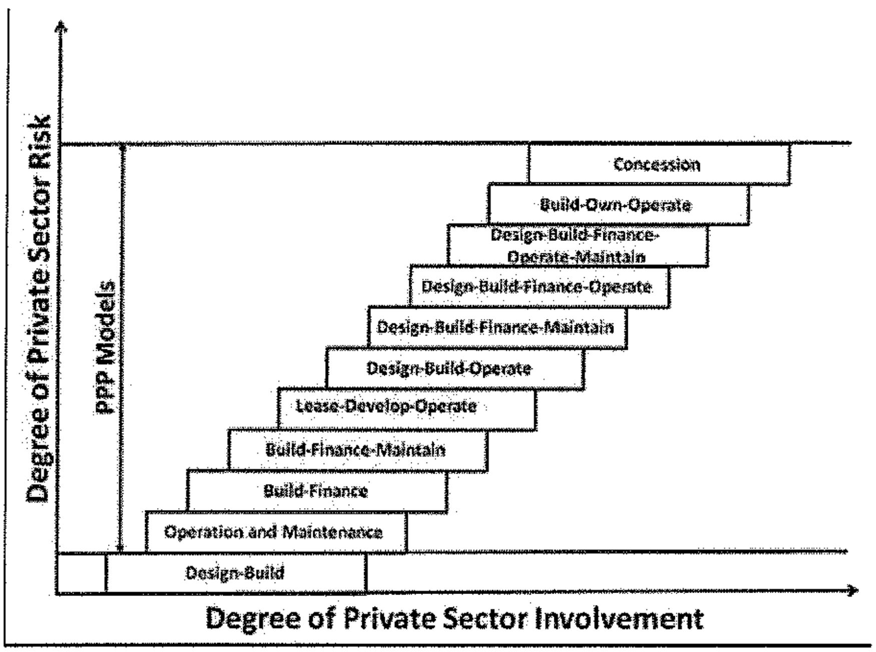

Figure 2. The scale of public-private partnerships
(Source: The Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships)

Conclusions

There is no question that Balboa Park and the City of San Diego are at a crossroads. For various reasons, the City does not have the financial ability to make the capital investments necessary to maintain the Park as the world class urban amenity and tourist attraction that it has become. Inaction, however, is not an option. Absent significant investment, the Park's physical plant is likely to deteriorate to the point where it can no longer serve the demands of its visitors or the needs of San Diegans. Our recent national experience with infrastructure has shown that once this tipping point is reached, the pace of additional decay and loss of amenity accelerates.

This short paper has tried to demonstrate that there are viable options, both for finance and governance. Despite San Diego's poor credit rating, the potential exists to derive significant additional revenue through the taxation process. These revenues could be used to underwrite bonds to address the most urgent and costly projects. Increased park fees also could be harnessed for the same purpose. Neither of these options is liable to be popular but that should not preclude their consideration. At the same time, the opportunities to capitalize on the generosity of a concerned and active citizenry should not be overlooked. Across the nation, private philanthropy has been the salvation of America's urban parks and Balboa Park has already benefited to some degree. Finally, there is a role for the private sector to provide services that are not central to the core mission of the Park, increasing the overall resources available for investment in new and improved facilities and providing for adequate maintenance. Although daunting, the Park's financial condition is not unsolvable. Hard times call for hard choices but a sufficient number of options exist to develop a workable financing plan.

Financing alone will not ensure the Park a sustainable future, however. Serious doubts exist regarding the current park management structure and these must be addressed if there is any hope of engaging the citizenry and the donor community. This paper has briefly mentioned some of the successes that other cities have achieved by partnering with the nonprofit sector. There is an extensive literature on this topic and there is nothing that would preclude San Diego and Balboa Park from pursuing a similar approach. At the same time, a Joint Powers Authority could be created that would provide for independent management of the Park while retaining primary decision-making authority in public hands. The primary benefit these models bring to park management is a firewall between park financial resources and the financial needs of the host city. Without such a firewall in place, doubts and concerns will cloud all decisions and very likely lead to negative voter reactions to tax and fee proposals and continued reluctance on the part of private donors to contribute to the Park. In addition, a successful park governance program must provide an effective and transparent planning and decision making process, clear lines of authority and responsibility, mechanisms for ensuring the availability of adequate funds, and improved processes for procurement, contracting, and project management. If a decision is made to effect real change what has been accomplished elsewhere can be duplicated in San Diego.