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## Forever Balboa Park Signs Special Use Permit With the City of San Diego to Improve Balboa Park

Forever Balboa Park and the City of San Diego's Partnership Advances

**SAN DIEGO (February 6, 2024)**—The Balboa Park nonprofit Forever Balboa Park and the City of San Diego signed a three-year Special Use Permit (SUP), effective January 1, 2024, that allows further collaboration between the two entities. The SUP assembles in one comprehensive agreement a scope of work that streamlines how Forever Balboa Park will work seven days a week to improve Balboa Park for all.

The agreement acknowledges the leadership role that Forever Balboa Park plays as the only nonprofit organization supporting the City of San Diego's Parks and Recreation department in caring for all 1,200 acres of Balboa Park. It also helps expedite projects and facilitate improvements in the park.

"Balboa Park is one of San Diego's most beloved treasures enjoyed by residents from across the region and around the world," says Mayor Todd Gloria. "The signing of this agreement signals San Diego's ongoing commitment to invest in the quality of life and economic benefits that Balboa Park creates. We are grateful for the partnership of Forever Balboa Park, whose 300-plus volunteers donate their time and talent to improve the park for all of us."

Forever Balboa Park is in its third year of operation after a merger between its longstanding predecessor organizations Friends of Balboa Park and the Balboa Park Conservancy. Forever Balboa Park works in all corners of the park, serving as front line ambassador for the park and making tangible improvements in the visitor experience. Examples of projects in the new three-year agreement include:

- 7-day-a-week visitor and information services to the 4.5+ million visitors each year through the Balboa Park Visitors Center
- Care for the 16,000+ trees that make up Balboa Park's urban forest in support of the city's climate action goals
- Stewardship of the 18+ public gardens and historic landscapes in the park, protecting the public horticultural collection and open spaces
- Improved interpretation, repair, and maintenance of Balboa Park's 60 miles of trails, increasing equitable access to outdoor recreation and learning
- Restoration of the historic assets in the park, such as the gardens, the Dorothea Laub Balboa Park Carousel, and the House of Hospitality
- Enhanced learning and placemaking experiences in the open spaces of the park, deepening people's connections to and appreciation of the park

While being handled through a separate approval and permitting process, Forever Balboa Park is also restoring the exterior gardens at the iconic Botanical Building and Gardens through its signature capital campaign, and its volunteer corps will care for the new gardens once installed.

The work Forever Balboa Park does in Balboa Park is made possible by passionate community members who volunteer their time. This agreement supports Forever Balboa Park in continuing to recruit, train, and deploy hundreds of volunteers to work alongside Parks and Recreation to steward the park. These volunteers provide exceptional visitor services and programs to local and global park visitors, while helping to make the park beautiful.

“The City of San Diego and the Parks and Recreation department appreciate our partnership with Forever Balboa Park,” says Andy Field, Director, Parks and Recreation Department. “This agreement will allow for improved collaboration in our combined efforts to maintain and improve Balboa Park and serves as a model for a successful private/public collaboration that augments what the city is able to do with its resources.”

“This agreement represents the culmination of a long-term collaboration between our organization, the city, and the hundreds of San Diego volunteers who care deeply about Balboa Park and its importance to a healthy and vibrant community,” says Elizabeth C. Babcock, PhD, President and CEO of Forever Balboa Park. “This new agreement strengthens and streamlines Forever Balboa Park’s ability to improve the park, while deepening the investment and commitment that San Diegans make to our city through volunteerism.”

“Forever Balboa Park is delighted by the strong support offered by Mayor Gloria and the Parks and Recreation team, who recognize the importance of close collaboration between San Diego’s nonprofit community and the city,” says Doug Kerner, Chair of Forever Balboa Park’s Board of Trustees. “Together, we are investing in Balboa Park, one of the unique assets of our community that make this city exceptional.”

### **Forever Balboa Park**

Forever Balboa Park is the leading nonprofit organization partnering with the City of San Diego, community organizations, and the public to enhance all 1,200 acres of Balboa Park. Its focus is to sustain the park’s legacy, enrich its many assets, and collaborate with park stakeholders to envision and execute initiatives that benefit both residents and visitors for decades to come. Forever Balboa Park brings valued resources to the park enabling capital improvements, raising funds, and recruiting volunteers to provide projects, programs, and services that promote the best interests of the park and the greater San Diego region.

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