



Agenda Report

25-982

Agenda Date: 10/20/2025

REPORT TO PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Consideration of the Revised Council-Approved Schematic Design for the New Public Neighborhood Park at 3905 Freedom Circle

COUNCIL PILLARS

Enhance Community Engagement and Transparency
Enhance Community Sports, Recreational and Arts Assets
Deliver and Enhance High-Quality Efficient Services and Infrastructure

BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara City Code 17.35 requires new residential development to dedicate parkland and/or the payment of in-lieu fees. Greystar Real Estate Partners submitted an application (File No. PLN2017-12516) to the City for a General Plan Amendment from High-Intensity Office/R&D to High Intensity Mixed-Use and a rezoning to Planned Development (PD) to allow for a new residential mixed-use development (Project). The City Council approved the General Plan Amendment and rezoning at a hearing on June 7, 2022. The Project area includes 13.3 acres comprising two parcels (APNs: 104-40-021 & 104-40-036) that are bounded by Freedom Circle, Mission College Boulevard, Highway 101, and San Tomas Aquino Creek. The Project site is also part of the proposed General Plan - Freedom Circle Focus Area under a separate development process by the City that encompasses 108 acres in northern Santa Clara.

The Project proposes the construction of 1,079 apartment units and will meet its parkland dedication requirements through, 1) the development of an 87,728 square foot (2.014 acres) public park with a connection to the San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail, 2) the installation of private recreational amenities, and 3) the payment of in-lieu fees for the remaining balance. The park will be dedicated to the City in fee title. The developer will construct all public park improvements in accordance with the City's design criteria and standard specifications and will maintain the park, in perpetuity, following dedication.

The Schematic Design Master Plan approved by City Council on February 22, 2022 ("Original Plan") for the public neighborhood park included the following features:

- A ½-acre natural grass field
- Landscaped and furnished park-like quiet area
- Playground for children ages 2-5 and 6-12
- A basketball court
- A family picnic area with tables, barbeques
- A bocce court
- An enclosed off-leash dog area with separate areas for small and large dogs

- Pathways, trees, and landscaping
- A connection to the San Tomas Creek Trail

The Original Plan also included twenty off-street parking stalls for park visitors to be split between Buildings B and C.

Commission and Council Action

On September 21, 2021, the Parks & Recreation Commission reviewed the community input and the proposed Schematic Design. After discussion, the Commission unanimously recommended that the City Council approve the preferred Schematic Design-Master Plan for the proposed neighborhood park (Attachment 1).

The City Council reviewed and approved the Parks & Recreation Commission's recommendation and adopted the proposed park Master Plan - Schematic Design (Attachment 2) on February 22, 2022.

DISCUSSION

The park design is returning to the Parks & Recreation Commission for review of updates made to the Original Plan. These updates are necessary due to a utility conflict involving existing overhead electric transmission and distribution lines, as well as associated guy wires, which encroach into the Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) lane. In accordance with the Fire Department's Conditions of Approval, these utility lines must be cleared prior to permit issuance and fully resolved prior to first occupancy. The developer has been working with Silicon Valley Power (SVP) to address the required modifications.

The relocation and reconfiguration of the transmission and distribution lines within the EVA lane were not included in the original design scope or the system impact analysis and addressing those changes necessitated modification of the park.

To resolve the conflict, several alternatives were explored. The only solution acceptable to both SVP and the Fire Department, was to shift the curb along the San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail inward toward the property line and park. This adjustment results in a 6.5-foot reduction in the width of the park on the side closest to the creek. To preserve the originally approved park acreage, the park will expand by approximately one foot toward Building B and approximately one foot toward Building C.

Additional modifications include:

- Repositioning park benches
- Relocating the trash enclosure further inward
- Realigning the off-leash dog area to fit the revised sidewalk and trash enclosure layout, while maintaining the same size as in the Original Plan.

These adjustments preserve the total square footage of the off-leash dog area as originally approved by City Council, while ensuring compliance with public safety and utility requirements.

Additionally, twenty off-street parking stalls for park visitors were originally proposed to be split between Buildings B and C; however, all of them have since been relocated to Building B, which also houses two public restrooms.

During the October 20, 2025, meeting, the Parks & Recreation Commission will review the updated schematic design (Attachment 3) and consider a recommendation to City Council to approve the proposed revisions to the neighborhood park design.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The impacts of the Greystar project, including the Original Plan, were analyzed in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that was prepared for the Freedom Circle Focus Area and Greystar General Plan Amendment (case file PLN2017-12516) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR and Notice of Availability were circulated for a 45-day period from November 5, 2021 to December 20, 2021 in accordance with CEQA requirements. The EIR indicated that the development of the Greystar Project would contribute to an increase in demand for parkland, but that the impact would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level with the payment of in-lieu fees and the provision of dedicated parkland as depicted in the Original Plan. The EIR incorporates project-specific conditions into the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) requiring this mitigation. As the proposed Park plan would result in the same amount of land dedicated to the City as under the Original Plan, the proposal would not result in any new significant environmental effects or increase the severity of any previously identified effects. The EIR did not identify any secondary impacts associated with park construction, and the Park layout changes are unlikely to present any difference in the impacts resulting from construction.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund for the current action, other than staff time budgeted in the Parks & Recreation Operating Budget for minor administrative tasks related to the operation of the neighborhood park as part of the City's overall park system. The developer will construct the public park improvements, provide a park sign, and maintain the park for the life of the park, all to City standards and at no cost to the City.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the Finance Department, City Attorney's Office and the Community Development Department.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Parks & Recreation Commission agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that City Council approve the revised Schematic Design for the New Public Neighborhood Park located at 3905 Freedom Circle.

Prepared by: Gina Saporito, Staff Analyst

Approved by: Damon Sparacino, Director, Parks & Recreation Department

ATTACHMENTS

1. RTC #21-1020: Consideration of the Schematic Design for the New Public Neighborhood Park

located at 3905 Freedom Circle (Greystar Development)

2. RTC #22-197: Action on the Parks & Recreation Commission's Recommendation to Approve the Schematic Design-Master Plan for the New Public Neighborhood Park located at 3905 Freedom Circle (Greystar Development)
3. 3905 Freedom Circle Neighborhood Park Updated Schematic Design