



Agenda Report

18-033

Agenda Date: 8/28/2018

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Review of Central Park Master Plan Guiding Principles

BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Clara's 52 acre Central Park is the City's only "community park." Designed in the early 1960s, when the City's population was under 60,000, the park was built out in several phases with federal, state and local funding. Since 2000, there have been various projects proposed that would improve, enlarge, or replace different park and recreational assets and facilities in the park including the Library, International Swim Center (ISC), Community Recreation Center (CRC), Lawn Bowls, Tennis Center, Park Maintenance Yard, Arbor Center and Playground, and a Creek Spur Trail.

In October 2017, Gates & Associates was contracted to assist the City with a Central Park Master Plan Update ("Plan"). The focus of the Plan is to create a coherent vision that will integrate and guide Central Park's future improvements by establishing a set of principles, community supported priorities, and appropriate professional design criteria. The Plan would help answer questions and address issues such as how the City should:; maximize green space within the park; improve access, circulation and parking; design or include new park facilities and recreation elements that serve all ages, abilities and interests. On March 20, 2018 the Parks & Recreation Commission recommended that Council approve the Central Park Master Plan Guiding Principles.

DISCUSSION

Community input was solicited from October 2017 to March 2018 and included a review of existing studies and data, hosting of community input meetings and events, conducting an online survey, interviewing stakeholder, and soliciting Commission input for Council recommendations. Through the robust engagement processes the community had opportunities to identify how they use and interact with Central Park and its elements, what functions well or not, and which park amenities are priorities to keep or add. The following set of twelve (12) Central Park Master Plan Update "Guiding Principles" emerged:

- Honor its legacy, history and blend of passive public park and active recreational uses in Central Park;
- Provide public visibility for the park amenities, trails and open green space;
- Provide context sensitivity to the local community, minimizing impacts on neighbors;
- Preserve green space;
- Provide connectivity to adjacent uses and accessibility for the greater community;
- Create community and "sense of place" places by re-imagining the public event spaces and reinvesting in Central Park as the heart of the community;
- Increase park capacity to accommodate a growing population, serve more people in the same space;
- Use principles of inclusive design to welcome visitors of all ages interests and abilities;

- Promote community health and wellness by providing age-friendly opportunities for intergenerational social and cultural exchange, offer something for everyone;
- Support City's sustainability goals;
- Integrate and enhance where feasible, the natural habitat with the built environment;
- Use research based best practices to approach park design and measureable recreation benefits and outcomes.

On March 20, 2018 the Parks & Recreation Commission recommended that Council approve the Central Park Master Plan Guiding Principles (Attachment 1). The principles will guide City staff, project architects and engineers to help set expectations of what to emphasize, and how the park will look and function in the future. The principles are mutually supporting to build a more cohesive Plan. For example, "Honor the Legacy" by preserving existing iconic features and amenities will assure that new projects will integrate well with the Lake, Pavilion, Arbor Center, and Veteran's Memorial. The previous Council direction to co-locate and consolidate the ISC and CRC into a new community recreation and aquatics center onto Kiely Blvd. makes practical sense given the principles of visibility, minimizing neighborhood impacts such as traffic, parking and noise, and preserving green space. Using research based best practices, and inclusive design to enhance connectivity and access supports how the park functions as a community space. As current facilities are evaluated and new activities proposed, a more coherent Plan and areas of opportunity emerge and can be evaluated and incorporated into the Plan. The next phase of the Master Plan Update will involve continued development of replacement, rehabilitation and/or renewal project scopes and schematic design options, cost estimating and prioritization of areas of Central Park for Council consideration.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) in that it is a governmental organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment. If any "projects" are exempt or are proposed for new park amenities that qualify as a project under CEQA, then the preparation of an Initial Study of Environmental Impacts or other appropriate clearance such as a Negative Declaration (ND), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be generated. The potential environmental impacts of the ISC-CRC project were addressed in a Mitigated Negative Declaration (CEQ2015-01189 (IS/MND)) certified and approved on September 20, 2016; and will be amended if necessary

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact for the current action. However, individual cost estimates will need to be developed and sources of funding identified for any future Central Park improvement projects proposed and prioritized for inclusion in the City's Capital Improvement Project Budget. Currently, the City does not have identified funding.

COORDINATION

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

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council 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 <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>> or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

Reviewed by: James Teixeira, Director of Parks & Recreation

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Central Park Master Plan Update Guiding Principles (Proposed)
2. Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes March 20, 2018