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| 8/28/2018 | 1 | Council and Authorities Concurrent Meeting | Approved | |

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Action on Central Park Master Plan Guiding Principles

BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Clara's 52 acre Central Park was designed in the early 1960s and built 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 such as Library expansion, International Swim Center (ISC), Community Recreation Center (CRC), Lawn Bowls Clubhouse, Tennis Center, ballfield and parking, Park Maintenance Yard, Arbor Center and Playground, and Creek 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, when complete, will help the City to: maximize green space within the park; improve access, circulation and parking; and, include new park facilities and recreation elements that will serve all ages, abilities and interests.

DISCUSSION

Community input was solicited from October 2017 to March 2018 and included a review of existing studies and data, community input meetings and events, an online survey, stakeholder interviews, and Commission input. The following set of twelve (12) Central Park Master Plan "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.

The Plan principles are mutually supporting and intended to be used together. For example, “Honor the Legacy” by preserving existing iconic features and amenities will assure that new projects will integrate well with existing iconic features such as the Lake, Pavilion, Arbor Center, and Veteran’s Memorial. As opportunities and funding arise, co-location and consolidation of facilities will help minimizing neighborhood impacts such as traffic, parking and noise while preserving green space. Using research based best practices, and inclusive design will enhance connectivity and access to supports how the park can best function as a space for the whole community.

On March 20, 2018 the Parks & Recreation Commission recommended that Council approve the Central Park Master Plan Guiding Principles (Attachment 1). The next phase of the Plan Update will involve development of specific project scopes, potential design options, cost estimates, and prioritization for Council consideration.

At the August 28 City Council Meeting, staff presented the guiding principles during the 6 pm Study Session for Council review. This report approves the guiding principles as presented.

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.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact for the current action. Any future Plan projects will need to be prioritized and allocated funds in the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Budget process.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Central Park Master Plan Guiding Principles.

Reviewed by: James Teixeira, Director of Parks & Recreation

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Central Park Master Plan Guiding Principles