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Title:	Public Input on the Schematic Design of the New Public Neighborhood Park Located at 1205 Coleman Avenue (Gateway Crossings)				
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REPORT TO PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Public Input on the Schematic Design of the New Public Neighborhood Park Located at 1205 Coleman Avenue (Gateway Crossings)

COUNCIL PILLAR

Enhance Community Sports, Recreational and Arts Assets

BACKGROUND

On July 9, 2019, the Santa Clara City Council approved the Hunter Storm Gateway Crossings mixed-use development located at 1205 Coleman Avenue (Project). The Project encompasses approximately 21.4 acres and is bounded by Brokaw Road to the north, Coleman Avenue to the east, a parking lot and undeveloped land to the south, and a storage area and railroad tracks to the west. Most of the Project site is in the City of Santa Clara and is part of a larger 244-acre Santa Clara Station Focus Area in the City's General Plan. The Santa Clara Station Focus Area will serve as a gateway into the City with office, hotel, retail, and high-density residential uses that maximizes the use of existing and planned transit and provides for improved pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections.

The Project is approved to construct 1,565 apartment units and will meet its parkland dedication requirements through a 2.01 acre public neighborhood park (Phase I) and a 22,972sf mini park (Phase II), as well as private on-site recreational amenities, and payment of City Mitigation Fee Act fees due in-lieu of parkland dedication in compliance with City Code 17.35. Both public parks will be designed and constructed by the developer and dedicated to the City in fee title and will be maintained by the developer after dedication.

Initial Schematic Design Review & Approval

An initial schematic design for the two-acre public neighborhood park parcel was developed by The Guzzardo Partnership, Inc. landscape architects (Attachment 1). The schematic design proposed: a natural grass play field, an enclosed off-leash dog area, play apparatus for children ages 2-5 and 6-12, benches, basketball court, fitness area, family picnic area with tables and BBQs, pathways, trees, and landscaping. The park design was reviewed by the Parks & Recreation Department as part of the City's project application and review process. The proposed schematic design met the Parks & Recreation Department's public park design requirements: an inclusive, age-friendly, sustainable design; playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 6-12, that contain all developmentally appropriate elements of play; provision of safe routes to and through the park and connectivity to adjacent uses with public access from public right of way; off street parking; an adjacent restroom; place-making & art features; natural habitat value; use of an approved plant palette; support of a diverse/active recreation program for the immediate neighborhood needs; and, addresses efficient operation and lifecycle maintenance considerations.

On October 15, 2019, the Parks & Recreation Commission reviewed the developer's entitled park elements and schematic design. The design was found to be in conformance with the Development Agreement section 4.12, the Landscape sheets L1.1 and L1.2, and Project Conditions of Approval PR1-PR7 and met the Department's park design criteria. The Commission recommended Council approval of the proposed schematic design as presented without a basketball court.

On January 15, 2021, Council deferred the Commission recommendation to allow for further community outreach and input on the schematic design of the Neighborhood Park. The new project developer, Holland Partner Group, hired Petersen Studio to conduct additional community outreach and to develop a new schematic design. The new design would incorporate expanded community input and address the existing project entitlements, site constraints, and City park design standards.

Additional Community Input

On July 7, 2021, Holland Partner Group and Petersen Studio held a community meeting via a remote meeting platform. The meeting was advertised on the City website, through communication channels, and public notices were sent to Old Quad, interested parties, and to identified properties within 1000 feet from the project location. There were over 30 attendees and panelists. The meeting included a presentation (Attachment 2) and opportunities for questions and clarification. On July 20, 2021 the developer made a presentation to the Parks & Recreation Commission (Attachment 3) and received public comment.

A community input survey was posted on the City website from July 8, 2021 through August 4, 2021, with a link to the Community Meeting presentation. The survey had 362 visitors with 280 responses which accounts for 14 hours of public comment. The Project team also attended the August 21, 2021 "Celebrate Santa Clara" special event in Central Park recording over 250 additional community contacts. The design team printed the survey questions and images on boards, and community members were asked to add a sticker on their preferred response. The pattern of responses on the survey boards was similar to the on-line survey.

Respondents favored the following: increasing the shade at the edges of the park (44%) and integrating active park elements with the lawn (38%); utilizing natural features for the play areas such as rocks, hills and logs (64%); and including interactive art element to engage visitors (62%). The responses were more diffuse on the type of garden planting to be included in the park design, with slightly more respondents favoring rain gardens/stormwater infiltration areas (28%), and an herb garden at dining/BBQ areas (28%). Overall, respondents favored an "informal" park design (53%).

Demographically, the online survey indicated that respondents were 37% aged 35-49, and 51% were aged 50 and older, while 54% of respondents reported being in the 95050 ZIP code area.

DISCUSSION

New neighborhood public parks are designed to meet the needs of the new residents in the immediate vicinity to reduce potential impacts upon the City parks system. The private on-site amenities complement the public park program. The Parks & Recreation Commission will receive a presentation (Attachment 4) by Holland Partner Group summarizing community feedback to date and seeking additional public input on two Park Program Diagrams that integrate the feedback received from the community for the Neighborhood Park at 1205 Coleman Avenue. The Commission will have the opportunity to ask questions, receive public comment, and provide Commission input.

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. The activity covered by this residential development project is consistent with the FEIR that the City certified on December 4, 2018 (after January 1, 1980).

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund for the current action. The developer will develop the alternative design to City standards, construct the public park improvements to Code, and maintain the park in perpetuity, at no cost to the City.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the City Attorney’s Office.

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 <<<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>>> .

RECOMMENDATION

Provide input for the Schematic Design for the New Public Neighborhood Park located at 1205 Coleman Avenue.

Reviewed by: Kimberly Castro, Recreation Manager

Approved by: James Teixeira, Director of Parks & Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

1. Neighborhood Park Schematic Design October 15, 2019
2. Community Presentation July 7, 2021
3. Commission Presentation July 20, 2021
4. Schematic Design Presentation for November 16, 2021