



Agenda Report

21-1020

Agenda Date: 9/21/2021

REPORT TO PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Consideration of the Schematic Design for the New Public Neighborhood Park located at 3905 Freedom Circle (Greystar Development)

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 to the City for a General Plan Amendment from High-Intensity Office/R&D to High Intensity Mixed-Use and Planned Development (PD) rezoning to allow for a new residential mixed-use development (Project). 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 to construct 1,075 apartment units and will meet its parkland dedication requirements through an 87,728 square foot (2.014 acres) public neighborhood park with connection to the San Tomas Creek Trail. The public park will be dedicated to the City in fee title. Public park improvements will be constructed by the developer to the City's design criteria and standard specifications and will be maintained by the developer after dedication.

The Schematic Design for the public neighborhood park 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, and a bocce court, an enclosed off-leash dog area with separate areas for small and large dogs, pathways, trees, landscaping, and a connection to the San Tomas Creek Trail. Twenty off-street parking stalls for park visitors are proposed to be provided in Buildings B and C. The proposed Schematic Design was reviewed by the Parks & Recreation Department, and as configured, meets the Department's research based best practices and requirements for public park design, such as: inclusive, age-friendly, sustainable design elements; support for an active recreation program; playgrounds that contain all elements of play; public access from public right of way that provides safe routes & pathway connectivity to and through the park; off street parking; adjacent restroom; place-making; natural habitat value; approved plant palette; consideration for efficient and effective operation and lifecycle maintenance.

On July 20, 2021, Manuela King, President of RHAA Landscape Architecture and Planning (RHAA) provided a presentation to the Parks & Recreation Commission. The Commission provided input on the proposed Schematic Design, including requesting the option for a multi-use sports court (pickleball, volleyball, other), and recommending that additional public input be solicited through social media channels, an in-person meeting, and an online community survey. The Commission deferred action on a recommendation to City Council to approve a preferred schematic design until

the September 2021 regular meeting.

DISCUSSION

On Saturday August 21, 2021, RHAA and City Parks & Recreation Staff conducted community outreach and collected public input on the park design at the Citywide special event Celebrate Santa Clara, in Central Park with approximately 150 responses from all ages including children. In addition, from August 19 until September 2, 2021, an online survey was hosted on the City website which collected 342 responses representing over 17 hours of public comment. The top three elements favored for use were the trail connection (51%), open lawn space (46%), and the picnic and BBQ areas (43%). Over 47% favored a multi-colored play structure for ages 2-5. Over 69% favored use of resilient surfacing in the play space. Most respondents envisioned driving to the park (66%), and 50% imagined visiting the park often or frequently. The features and amenities seem to support those activities most desired. While the survey also indicated various other potential popular activities, the space available would not be able to accommodate additional activities such as a disc golf course at this park location without displacing or impacting the other primary and more desirable park amenities.

At the September 2021 Regular Meeting, the Commission will review community input and an updated Schematic Design (Attachment 1) and make a recommendation to Council to approve the preferred Schematic Design for the neighborhood park.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The review of the schematic design of a new public neighborhood park 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 impacts of the Greystar General Plan Amendment, development proposal and Freedom Circle Focus Area will be described in an Environmental Impact Report provided to the Planning Commission and City Council in their consideration of the approval of the project.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund for the current action. The developer will construct the public park improvements, provide a park sign, and maintain the park in perpetuity, all to City standards and 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, e-mail clerk@santaclaraca.gov <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>> .

RECOMMENDATION

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

Reviewed by: Dale Seale, Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation

Approved by: James Teixeira, Director of Parks & Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

1. 3905 Freedom Circle Neighborhood Park - Schematic Design Update (09 16 21)