



Agenda Report

19-1202

Agenda Date: 10/15/2019

REPORT TO PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Initiate Review and Public Comment Period on the Central Park Master Plan Administrative Draft

BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Clara's 52-acre Central Park was designed in the early 1960s and built out in several phases with federal, state and local funding. Since 2000, there have been various studies and projects proposed that would improve, enlarge, or replace different park and recreational assets and facilities in the park. 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 intent of the Plan is to provide guidance on how to realistically best meet increased community needs and address aging facility and infrastructure issues over the next 20 years while maximizing green space within the park, improving access, circulation and parking, envisioning new park facilities and recreation elements that serve all ages, abilities and interests.

Extensive 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 stakeholders, and soliciting Commission input. On March 22, 2018 the Parks & Recreation Commission recommended to Council the Plan's Guiding Principles. On August 28, 2018, Council approved the Guiding Principles and directed staff to move forward with the development of the Central Park Master Plan. Following continued development of replacement, rehabilitation and/or renewal project scopes and schematic design options, cost estimating and prioritization of areas of Central Park, in April 2019, a community meeting was held and the Draft Plan and presentation were posted on the City's Web page. Since then, the project team has reviewed and refined the cost estimates, timeline, phasing, potential impacts, and feasibility.

DISCUSSION

The Plan Administrative Draft (Attachment 1) is ready for public comment. The next steps will be for additional opportunities for comment through on-line survey, community and Commission input in October and November of 2019, and Council consideration of adoption in December 2019.

MEASURE R

The recommendation for changes to the existing Central Park may be subject to Measure R. In November 2016, voters passed Measure R, which added Section 714.1 Protection of Parkland and Public Open Space to the City Charter. Measure R prohibits selling, leasing, or otherwise disposing of parkland for a period of one hundred eighty (180) days or more, and also prohibits its use from changing, being abandoned, or discontinued without such sale, lease, disposal or changed use having first been authorized or ratified by a two-thirds majority vote of the electorate during a general municipal election for that purpose. Measure R also prohibits changes in park use for over 180 days

without a majority vote of the electorate and substantial building, construction, reconstruction or development upon dedicated parkland except pursuant to ordinance subject to referendum. The referendum process is set forth in the Elections Code.

The Central Park Master Plan Update proposes several individual projects that may be considered as “substantial building, construction, reconstruction, or development” of the existing park and facilities. The approval of the Central Park Master Plan projects and schematic design will require an ordinance in order to comply with Measure R and will be introduced for the Council’s consideration in the final approval of the Plan. It does not include a sale, lease, disposal, or change in use that would require a majority vote of the electorate. Staff will propose, after the close of the public comment period, that the Commission recommend that the City Council with approval the Central Park Master Plan, introduce an Ordinance to ensure compliance with Measure R. The ordinance will come back to Council at a subsequent meeting for adoption in accordance with City Charter sections 808 and 812.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action to initiate public input 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. However, if any proposed improvements within the Plan do 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 as the specific project moves forward for approval. Some projects contained in the Plan may be considered exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15301 “Existing Facilities”, 15302 “replacement or reconstruction”, and 15303 “new construction or conversion of small structures” as the activity consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting or minor alteration of existing public facilities or topographical features involving negligible expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agencies determination. In addition, the potential environmental impacts of an 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 from the current action. As noted in the Master Plan, sources of funding will need to be identified and allocated by Council for any project to be implemented. If the Master Plan is approved by Council, then the overall cost estimates for proposed projects identified in the Plan would provide a reference point for consideration, prioritization and potential inclusion in future City Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budgets. As of this report date, the Arbor Center Playground is an approved CIP #3183, and partial funding has been allocated for the Central Park Magical Bridge All Inclusive Playground in the amount of \$3.4 million using City, County and future contributions.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Park & Recreation Commission’s 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.

An City E-notify notice was emailed to persons who have opted to receive notification of Parks & Recreation information and activities related to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

Initiate review and public comment period for the Central Park Master Plan Administrative Draft.

Approved by: James Teixeira, Director of Parks & Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

1. Central Park Master Plan Administrative Draft