



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: August 27, 2014
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Proposed Bath St Pocket Park

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission:

- A. Recommend to City Council that the Bath St Pocket Park be designated a neighborhood park as defined in Santa Barbara Municipal Code Section 28.37.030; and
- B. Make the following findings pursuant to SBMC Section 28.37.025 to approve the development of the Bath St Pocket Park:
 - i. That the proposed park improvements are appropriate or necessary for the benefit of the community and visitors;
 - ii. That the proposed park facilities including lighting, play areas, and associated landscaping, will be compatible with the character of the neighborhood;
 - iii. That the total area of the site and the setbacks of all facilities from the property lines and street are sufficient, in view of the physical character of the land, proposed development and neighborhood, to avoid significant negative effects on surrounding properties;
 - iv. That the intensity of park use is appropriate and compatible with the character of the neighborhood;
 - v. That the proposed park is compatible with the scenic character of the City;
 - vi. That the proposed structures are compatible with the neighborhood in terms of size, bulk and scale or location.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The proposed park at Bath and Ortega Streets was first identified in the late 1990s during the environmental review and permitting phase of the Lower Mission Creek Flood Control (LMC) Project. The property was acquired for the purposes of the LMC project, and the City's Redevelopment Agency Board approved the funds for park development. At the time, it was not known whether acquisition of additional adjacent parcels would increase the size of the park. Construction of the park was intended to

occur after construction of the Ortega Street Bridge, which was completed in December 2011. With the dissolution of the City's Redevelopment Agency in December 2011, development of the park was put on hold. After completion of the state mandated dissolution process, funding was re-secured in 2013. In December 2013, the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency approved \$250,000 for park design and construction. Work on the project began in February 2014.

Project Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the project is to design and install a small neighborhood park for West Downtown neighborhood families. Located in a high density residential neighborhood at the corner of Bath and Ortega Streets, the project design concept is based on a number of factors, including public safety, lack of existing play areas for children, and the need for additional park space in a high density neighborhood. The goals of the project are to enhance the neighborhood, provide safe recreation opportunities, and achieve a sustainable park design. A sustainable park design would maximize the aesthetics benefits of the park, while minimizing maintenance requirements and ongoing use of resources.

Project Design Development

The proposed park design was developed with input from neighborhood residents, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and City staff. A neighborhood meeting held on March 13, 2014 resulted in the selection of the playground design. On March 26, 2014, the Parks and Recreation Commission concurred and recommended that the playground be designed for 2 to 5-year old children. The Commission also discussed including an art component and interpretive signage in the project.

The proposed park includes the installation of a small playground, lighting, fencing, landscaping, mulch, irrigation, and site amenities including permeable pavers, benches, trash/recycling cans, signage, and a mosaic tile mural with the park name and creek theme (Attachment 1). Similar in style to other tile art located in City parks and on City sidewalks, the mosaic will be located in the sidewalk at the entrance to the park (Attachment 2).

The site will be fenced using decorative iron similar to the fence at Parqué de Los Niños in the lower Westside neighborhood. The park will have one entrance on Ortega Street. Park lighting will match the existing street lighting. The project also includes new trees, landscaping and mulch. Given the City's recent Stage Two Drought declaration and the significant potential for prolonged drought conditions, as well as mandated reductions in water use, the project design does not include turf. If, at the time of project construction, drought conditions persist, the Department may delay installation of the new trees and landscaping.

Creek and Front Yard Setback Encroachments

The project site is small (2,562 square feet) and quite constrained by both the 25-foot Mission Creek setback, and the 10-foot front yard setbacks. The developable area outside the setbacks is only 400 square feet. Encroachments into both the Mission Creek setback and the front yard setbacks are required in order to achieve the proposed project. The project design was developed with input from the Creeks Division, Chief Building Official and Planning staff. While not ideal, due to the encroachments into both the Mission Creek and front-yard setbacks, and the need for rubberized playground surfacing, the proposed project meets the neighborhood and Commission objectives.

Project Review and Approval

The project requires the following actions:

- Design review and approval by the Architectural Board of Review (ABR)
- Modification approvals for the front-yard and Mission Creek setback encroachments
- Visual Arts in Public Places (VAPP) Committee approval of the tile mosaic
- Parks and Recreation Commission findings for approval and park designation recommendation to City Council
- City Council action to designate the park a neighborhood park

The project received concept review by the ABR on June 23, 2014. Overall, the ABR was supportive of the project. The project design was revised to address a number of ABR considerations. It is anticipated that the project will receive final ABR approval on September 2, 2014. The tile mosaic design was approved by the VAPP Committee on July 17, 2014. The Community Development Department Staff Hearing Officer and the Chief Building Official approved the creek and front-yard setback encroachments.

With Commission and ABR approvals, the project will be scheduled for City Council action in later September. Project construction could begin in late October and be complete by the end of December.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Park design plans
 2. Tile Mosaic design

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