



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** October 28, 2015  
**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department  
**SUBJECT:** Cabrillo Ball Park Renovation Project

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission:

- A. Receives a presentation on the conceptual park improvements for the Cabrillo Ball Park Renovation Project; and
- B. Selects one enhanced recreation option for further design.

**DISCUSSION:**

Background

The 5-acre Cabrillo Ball Park, located at the intersections of Milpas Street, Cabrillo Boulevard and Calle Puerto Vallarta, includes a ball field, portable bleachers, field lighting, restroom facilities, a concrete perimeter sidewalk, trees and landscaping, and the Herbert Bayer Chromatic Gate sculpture.

In fall 2010, the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) developed a comprehensive proposal to renovate the park to address safety, improve park infrastructure and enhance recreation. From 2011-2014, the Department completed a number of site improvements including the installation of a fence around the restrooms and bleachers, field storm drainage improvements, and replacement of the field pole lights. The Chromatic Gate was also refurbished by the County Arts Commission.

The Department presented preliminary concepts of various park improvements to the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) on January 28, 2015. These encompassed general overall improvements to the park, specific options for enhancing park entrances, and expanded recreational use of the southwest corner of the park, outside the active ball field area. The recreational use options included a fenced dog off leash area, basketball court, youth skate plaza, adult fitness area, and a combined adult fitness and children's area. The Commission supported the proposed overall improvements to the entire park, and recommended further evaluation of the following three expanded recreation options:

1. Adult Fitness and Youth Play Area Plan Combined
2. Basketball Courts
3. Combined Outdoor fitness and Basketball Court

### Renovation Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the Cabrillo Ball Park Renovation Project (Project) are to maintain and enhance the function of the park as a premier ball field, expand recreation opportunities, promote and maintain park safety, upgrade park infrastructure, and enhance park aesthetics.

### Concept Plan Development

In June 2015, the Department contracted with CJM::LA to prepare design plans for the Project. Prior to starting design work, CJM::LA met with Staff and completed a site analysis and visioning study (Attachments 1 and 2). This included review of site access and circulation, views, safety concerns, and underutilized areas, as well as an assessment of irrigation, landscape elements and potential lighting. The visioning study examined design elements within the waterfront area and inspirational images of potential improvements.

The following discussion outlines considerations for general overall improvements to the park, and evaluates the specific options for enhancing park entrances and expanding recreational use of the southwest corner of the park, outside the active ball field area. These options included the development of Adult Fitness and a Youth Play Area, Basketball Courts, and Combined Outdoor fitness and Basketball Court

### Overall Park Improvements

As discussed during the January 28, 2015, Commission meeting, there are a number of general overall improvements that will enhance park aesthetics, make the park more inviting, increase safety, and enhance recreation (see Attachment 3).

*Ball Field:* Ball field improvements include installation of a 6' tall homerun fence and mow strip to separate the active ball field from other park uses while keeping the sides open to promote drop-in use. Fencing around the restrooms, bleachers and back stop will be relocated and redesigned to improve access, circulation and aesthetics. Field improvements include laser leveling the outfield, a more efficient irrigation system and new turf.

*Park Circulation:* Circulation improvement objectives will establish a comfortable 8' walking path around the park. In addition to a wider sidewalk along Calle Puerto Vallarta, a parkway extension is proposed at the Milpas and Calle Puerto Vallarta corner, and

interior pathway connections are proposed at the corners of Cabrillo Blvd. and Calle Puerto Vallarta and Cabrillo Boulevard and Milpas.

*Park Entrances:* At Cabrillo Blvd. and Milpas Street, the design objective is to develop an open and inviting entrance, and create a connection to Chase Palm Park. Similar to the January 28, 2015 drawings, a circular plaza and wide entry path will address the corner with enhanced paving. A grouping of mature palm trees will be relocated to create a formal backdrop. A fitness station will be located behind the palm grouping to keep the corner active.

At Milpas Street and Calle Puerto Vallarta, circulation would be improved through redesign of the fence and enhancing the corner planter. By relocating the fencing away from the restroom entrances, paving can be replaced with planter area allowing for a 12' wide sidewalk rounding the corner. Furthermore, the large park sign will be relocated up against the building to increase corner visibility for walkers. Two groupings of small palm trees will help anchor the corner.

*Landscaping and Trees:* There are twelve new trees shown on the conceptual plan and nine proposed for removal. The trees proposed for removal include six stunted street trees along Calle Puerto Vallarta, one unhealthy eucalyptus, a pine and a Canary Island palm. Some of the preliminary landscape concepts include grasses in a naturalistic pattern. Still under review, landscape considerations include visibility, safety, maintenance, durability and compatibility. The Department is working with CJM::LA to identify landscaping that would be appropriate for this location and proposed use while anchoring the site with the waterfront.

### Expanded Recreation Options

The southwestern section of the park provides the most opportunity for expanded recreation. The potential area available is 16,000 square feet. This area takes into consideration the construction of an internal walkway and a ball field home run fence. It assumes a buffer area from Cabrillo Blvd. and Calle Puerto Vallarta as well as from the Chromatic Gate. Since Cabrillo Ball Park experiences periodic flooding during storm events, any improvements would need to withstand seasonal standing water or could be designed to minimize the potential for flooding to damage the infrastructure.

Of primary consideration is the extent to which these options are compatible with the park and neighborhood, are cost effective to develop and maintain, respond to recreation needs, and can be designed and operated safely. Surrounding park uses include two hotels, single family residences, a grocery market, and Chase Palm Park/East Beach.

*Adult Fitness Area and Youth Play Area:* This option includes several fitness stations for all abilities that are grouped to promote social interaction, two open lawn areas for casual

drop-in use or specific fitness training, bike parking, planters to help define areas and two play mound areas for child play (see Attachment 4). The child play areas will support the primary focus of adult fitness and use by families. The play mounds are smaller in scale than a formal playground and will focus on entertaining small children while parents workout.

There is wide community support for outdoor fitness equipment. The proposed fitness equipment could be used in a multi-site workout. Fitness groups have expressed interest in renting this type of amenity. The Department could program use during off-peak hours and while also maintaining free drop-in use opportunities. Fitness equipment would tie in active use of the beach parks for running and walking and could offer parents an exercise option while their children use the ball field or play mounds.

*Basketball Court:* This option proposes a junior high sized court. The potential for two courts was studied, however, the amount of paving required overwhelmed the area and did not provide adequate space for a buffer between the Chromatic Gate and the ball field.

Over the years, there have been various discussions of developing outdoor basketball courts in the City's waterfront, with the most recent focused on Leadbetter Beach Park. The Department believes there is a need for courts within the city. Considerations for a basketball court include noise, use policies, as well as management and site requirements for development. The proposed site is currently used as an active ball field and a basketball court will be a compatible use. The junior high sized court (74'x42') is appropriate for recreational play for all ages and is not intended for use as a NBA sized tournament court (94'x50'). The basket height will be 10' with a clear backboard to reduce visual impacts. To mitigate balls rolling into traffic, the court has been oriented using existing topography and distance as buffers. No active programming of the court would be recommended to allow for drop-in use. Lighting would not be provided.

*Combined Outdoor Fitness and Basketball Court:* This option includes one junior high sized court, a small paved area, several fitness stations, flat lawn areas for drop-in use or specific fitness training, a lawn mound to create a gathering point to watch games and bike parking at both path entrances (see Attachment 5). The Department has some concerns over conflicts with the close proximity of the workout stations to the court and this issue can be resolved as the design progresses.

### Outreach

A community meeting was held on October 15, 2015 at the park and about 25 people attended. Overall, participants were in favor of the improvements. There were some concerns and opposition to the basketball court due to potential noise and neighborhood compatibility. The Department also received comments via email regarding the proposed

project. Comments from the community meeting as well as the email communication are included in Attachment 6.

### Next Steps

The purpose of this Staff report and Commission discussion is to review the proposed renovations and select one enhanced recreation design option for further design. The preferred option will be further refined and preliminary landscape architecture and engineering plans will be developed to support design review and additional community discussion. The project will require Historic Landmarks Commission approval and a Coastal Development Permit. Without any significant obstacles, it is anticipated that design and permitting could be complete within one year. Construction could start in late 2016.

### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The Department's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes \$860,000 for the design and construction of the Project. The preliminary cost estimate for construction could range from \$913,000 to \$978,000. This includes \$738,000 for the overall site improvements, including new irrigation. The cost for the fitness and children's play areas could be \$175,000 or \$240,000 for the basketball court and fitness areas. These costs will continue to get refined as the project further develops. If needed, the Department would seek grant funds and/or additional General Fund allocations to complete the project.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Site Analysis
2. Visioning Study
3. Overall Park Improvement Plan
4. Enhanced Recreation – Adult Fitness and Youth Play Area
5. Enhanced Recreation – Combined Fitness and Basketball Court
6. Community comments during the October 15, 2015 Community Meeting

**PREPARED BY:** Justin Van Mullem, Associate Planner

**APPROVED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Acting Parks and Recreation Director