



May 18, 2016

Jill Zachary, Director  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
Laguna Street  
Santa Barbara, California

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**Executive Director**

Michael Nelson

Subject: Las Positas Tennis Courts - Renovation Project Design

Dear Ms. Zachary,

The Elings Park Foundation requests the opportunity to provide the Parks and Recreation Commission with a presentation of its revised design program and plans for the renovation/ reconstruction of facilities at the Las Positas Tennis Courts. The Foundation seeks approval of the Parks and Recreation Commission of these plans so it may fully comply with its lease agreement with the City of Santa Barbara, which requires improvement of the existing facilities at the Courts.

**Background**

The Las Positas Tennis Courts are located at 1298 Las Positas Road at Elings Park. The facility comprises six lighted tennis courts, a practice court, restrooms, office and a parking lot. Constructed in 1972, the Courts were operated by the City of Santa Barbara, Parks and Recreation Department until November 2010, when the City executed a lease agreement with the Elings Park Foundations to operate, maintain, and improve the Las Positas Tennis Courts.

The Foundation has prepared, reviewed and revised a conceptual design for the reconstruction of the Las Positas Tennis Courts with the Architectural Board of Review (ABR), which has expressed agreement with the size, bulk, and scale of the design concept we are recommending today. These plans also reflect comments and recommendations made by the Foundation’s Board of Directors, its Tennis Committee and City staff. Comments expressed by commissioners, councilmembers and the public during annual report presentations to the City Council and Park and Recreation Commission were also considered and in some cases incorporated in the revised design.

**Scope of Work**

The Elings Park Foundation raised private funds to complete a number of deferred critical maintenance projects: replaced all tennis court fencing, resurfaced six courts,

replaced windscreens, and painted all tennis court lighting. The organization is confident it can raise the funds necessary to complete the improvements and reconstruction that are proposed.

Presently, park staff, volunteers and independent contractors are managing the facility. The partnership it had entered with the Santa Barbara School of Tennis has been discontinued. The Foundation is pleased to report that its rates have been reduced and its membership has tripled from approximately 50 to 200 members.

## **Operations**

The lease agreement requires the Foundation to fund, operate and maintain the Las Positas Tennis Facility, "...to insure tennis services to the public are continued, and, to improve its current condition..." It gave authority to impose fees, solicit grants and enter into concession agreements "for the provision of services to the public that are compatible with or accessory to park and recreation purposes on the premises".

## **Renovation and Reconstruction Project Objectives**

The Elings Park Foundation's acceptance of a lease agreement for the Las Positas Tennis Courts was predicated on a desire to perpetuate the public's use of the Courts and provide an affordable tennis experience for players, families and young people, who wish to enjoy or learn the game of tennis. Moreover, the Foundation seeks to implement a business model that could offset the Courts operating costs from fees, grants and donations, as it has done for three decades at Elings Park.

The organization realized that the City's, nor the Foundation's objectives could be achieved at a facility characterized by failing infrastructure, dilapidated structures; and management that consisted of infrequent monitoring and no programming.

As a consequence, the Foundation, consistent with the terms of lease agreement, resolved to complete deferred maintenance projects and make plans to renovate, redesign and rebuild failing bathrooms, offices, walkways and public areas at the Las Positas Tennis Courts.

## **Tennis Recreation Programming**

The City of Santa Barbara and Elings Park Foundation mutually recognized and appreciated the importance of maintaining the tennis facility for the primary purpose of providing recreational tennis opportunities to the general public.

In fact, the City provided guidance to the Foundation encouraging tennis programming that consisted of a year-round balance of activities for youth and adults, including instruction programs, camps, clinics, leagues, and tournaments. This guidance required substantial consideration be given to maintaining tennis courts available for informal play on a drop-in

basis.

Moreover, it should also be noted that this section of the lease entitled the Foundation to determine the appropriate balance of programming and consider the need to generate sufficient revenue to maintain and operate the facility.

Guided by this description, the organization continuously strives to achieve a sustainable programming mix and balance of activities at the Courts. Though the Foundation is currently providing a comprehensive tennis program, it believes that rebuilding and renovating the facilities infrastructure is critical to accomplish these objectives in a more sustainable and enjoyable way.

## **Park Improvements**

Recognizing that every building at the Las Positas Tennis Courts is in need of serious repair, renovation or replacement, the Board of Directors decided replacement of the two existing structures with a single tennis building, and the renovation and redesign of the parking lot, plazas/patios, stadium seating and pathways were imperatives.

The proposed reconstruction and renovation at the Las Positas Tennis Courts will satisfy the terms of the lease agreement by renovating and redesigning the existing tennis facilities; and, upgrading and replacing failing buildings and infrastructure. This restoration will enhance the original recreation functions of the tennis facility and dramatically improve accessibility and enjoyment of the public.

The Foundation prepared and reviewed a conceptual design for the reconstructing buildings and infrastructure at the Las Positas Tennis Courts with the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) on three occasions. A number of comments and recommendations to improve the facility's design were raised and incorporated in the design, which is the subject of this presentation. Following our last presentation to ABR, they expressed their comfort with the size, bulk, and scale of the revised design concept.

A new tennis recreation building will be constructed which includes restrooms, office /pro shop and multi-purpose room. The work to be performed will require the demolition of the office, sidewalks, bathrooms and shower facilities. The existing practice court and backboard will be retained and covered by an extension of the new building's roof. The existing stadium seating will be replaced by a court side seating area that will feature new stepped seating, planting areas and stairs leading to the courts. The current cracked asphalt patio will be replaced with a larger new permeable paver patio. A new paver sidewalk will replace the present asphalt walkway and will improve accessibility to the courts. A final component requires repair and improvement of the existing parking lot.

## Scope of Renovation

What follows is a listing of the key components of the design program:

- Demolish sidewalks, office, bathrooms and shower facilities (872 sq. ft.) and construct a new tennis recreation building (1927 sq. ft.) with restrooms, office, pro shop and multi-purpose room.
- The new building will include a multipurpose room which will be used to provide space to stage and conduct programming and special events. (summer camps, fitness programs, demonstrations U.S.T.A, Inter Club team receptions and mixers, fundraisers, etc.)
- The new building's roof will be extended to incorporate and cover the existing concrete tennis practice court and backboard (1540 sq. ft.) which should provide new programming opportunities that could be scheduled and managed so as not materially impact the use of the practice court. (summer camps, fitness programs, demonstrations U.S.T.A, Inter Club team receptions and mixers, fundraisers, etc.) Lighting shall be replaced beneath the roof that achieves the existing levels of illumination.
- Replacement of the existing stadium court seating area with stepped planting areas and new stairs down to the courts. New paver patio will replace existing asphalt and provide for an expanded patio area with increased court visibility.
- Repair and improve the existing parking lot.
- Proposal will involve grading that requires a cut under main building of approximately 198 cu. yards and a fill under main building of 0 cu. yards; in addition, a cut and a fill of approximately 22 yards will be necessary for the new walkway.

The original facility was designed and constructed in the early 70's. Though the project will be completed within the original footprint, it endeavors to do more than repair, renovate, and upgrade structures to current standards. The Board has insisted that the renovation provide design features that builds upon the facility's remarkable legacy, improves the present design and significantly increases its functionality.

Some examples of the design approach are:

- Rebuild structures and pathways to create a parklike setting that blends into the site's topography and landscape; buff concrete, dark green steel and light green roof will be used to complement the color palette of surrounding hillside; the low roof design court side and the high roof at the rear of the building seeks to integrate structures with the natural topography.
- The patio and plaza in front of the tennis building are redesigned to provide greater utility and more space for tennis related activities and social events. (summer camps, fitness programs, demonstrations U.S.T.A, Inter Club team receptions and mixers, fundraisers, etc.)

- The roof that covers the existing practice court will in addition to incorporating the practice facility into the new building, offer tennis players opportunities to practice during inclement weather, and potentially more space for programming and fundraising that could be scheduled to avoid impacts to usage of the practice court.
- The roof above the practice court also provides the option of mounting photovoltaic solar panels over the standing seam metal roofing.
- Shade structures will match building awnings to create a more attractive and usable space.
- Exterior spaces are designed to increase visibility of all courts; stadium seating will be replaced, expanded and include stepped seating for tournaments, exhibitions, competitions and social events.
- The rotting trellis will be replaced with large planters and new trees.
- Cast iron used for the tennis building will be similar to the existing concrete walls, and particular those that characterize the practice court.
- Storm water will be reused to maintain landscape elements; permeable pavers will also replace the existing asphalt and help manage storm water.
- New entry gates and landscape elements will make the facility more attractive. New sandstone veneer entry gate posts and steel swinging entry gates will be installed similar to those found at the Elings Park entry off Las Positas Road at Harwin Parkway.

## **Landscape Design**

The planting concept for the project is based on the objectives of: (1) providing a plant palette that is low water-consuming, with a (2) low impact on Elings Park's maintenance budget, and (3) an emphasis on native plant materials that have been successful at the site and elsewhere in the park.

Existing trees and shrubs that have thrived on the site without causing problems with pavement or excessive litter, or can be maintained in a sustainable manner, will be preserved in place. Other plants that have not been successful in these terms will be replaced with species that should require less-intensive maintenance, and will be primarily locally-indigenous natives.

The two existing Orchid trees on the patio between the building and the courts will be removed, and replaced with two Western Redbud trees. The Orchid trees have not been consistently maintained, and are somewhat misshapen. In addition, their litter (flowers and seed pods) is problematic in terms of safety. The proposed replacement trees are substantially less messy.

While the majority of species proposed are southern coastal California natives, a few are Mediterranean exotics that are well-adapted to the Las Positas Canyon microclimate and have been tested on-site in the Park or in the tennis complex.

It is expected that the plants selected for use on the site will not require pruning or shearing to control their growth. Rather, they are expected to fit into the planting areas with sufficient area to accommodate their ultimate size based on their natural growth characteristics.

All plantings will be irrigated with an automated emitter system utilizing a smart controller equipped with rain sensors to keep watering tuned to actual need.

### **Tier 3 Storm Water - Best Management Practices**

Runoff from the project will be mitigated through the use of the Storm Water BMP compliance measures indicated on the project plans and described below. The property currently drains in a southerly direction to a Caltrans ditch that runs along Las Positas Road and eventually to a culvert that leads towards Arroyo Burro Creek. The project will seek to maintain existing drainage patterns.

The Storm Water BMP compliance measure will include:

- Replacement of concrete/asphalt upper patio with permeable pavers on gravel base
- Replacement of asphalt driveway entrances with permeable pavers on gravel base
- Installation of a gravel infiltration ditch along downstream edge of parking lot
- Drain tennis courts to Flo-Well Drywell
- Sweep tennis courts weekly

The combined use of the Tier 3 Storm Water BMP Compliance Measures listed above will serve to filter runoff in an acceptable manner before being discharged to the culvert under Las Positas Road, and thus greatly improving the storm water quality leaving the site.

### **Next Steps**

Should the Parks and Recreation Commission approve this design program, the Elings Park Foundation would return to ABR for project design and development plan approvals. At this point, the Foundation would be able to utilize the design to expand its fundraising efforts to a wider audience and graphically demonstrate to donors what their contributions would produce; and, to develop construction drawings and estimates of the construction costs associated with the renovation and rebuilding of the tennis center at the Las Positas Tennis Courts.

Sincerely,

Michael Nelson  
Executive Director  
Elings Park Foundation