



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AND NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT

AGENDA DATE: June 27, 2018

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
Neighborhood Advisory Council

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Bohnett Park Renovation Project

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission and Council receive a presentation and provide advisory comments on the Bohnett Park Renovation Project.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this staff report and the joint Parks and Recreation Commission and Neighborhood Advisory Council discussion is to review the proposed renovation plan and provide advisory comments. Comments will be incorporated into preliminary landscape plans to support design review and permitting.

Background

Bohnett Park is a 5.25-acre neighborhood park in the Westside neighborhood. Originally called Anapamu Park when it was acquired by the City of Santa Barbara (City) in 1936, the park was improved for baseball, archery, and summer programs in 1940. The site was further developed in 1964 with construction of the Westside Boys' Club (now called the United Boys and Girls Club). In conjunction with park improvements funded by the International Rotary Club in 1976, the park was renamed in honor of Rotarian and former City mayor Floyd O. Bohnett. The ensuing 40 years saw various park expansion and improvement projects, including the construction of the current restrooms in 1994, the restoration of Old Mission Creek in 2004, the creation of the pocket park extension on San Andres Street in 2008, and several other smaller community projects.

Today, Bohnett Park continues to be a well-used site for recreation and leisure as it is the only public park in the Westside neighborhood. Park recreational amenities include a 30,000 square foot unstriped turf field used for multiple sports, concrete bleachers built into the slope, and a junior high size basketball court that is also used as two handball courts. More leisure based features include two large and four small picnic tables with four accompanying

BBQ grills under the mature sycamore trees adjacent to Old Mission Creek. There is also a playground for children ages five to twelve, with swings, slides and a climbing structure. Currently, there are six park entry points, including two ramps from San Pascual Street. Although playground, creek and lighting improvements have been completed in the past 15 years, the main field, pathways, and basketball court have not been significantly renovated.

Renovation Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the Bohnett Park Renovation Project (Project) are to expand recreation opportunities, promote and maintain park safety, upgrade park infrastructure, and enhance park aesthetics. The Project focuses on improvements to the picnic areas and basketball court, renewal of the landscaping and turf area, creation of a compliant accessible entrance, improved safety lighting, and the addition of active recreational amenities. The Project does not include modifications to the United Boys and Girls Club building or renovation of the restroom building.

On April 10, 2018, the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) contracted with the SWA Group, a firm with experience designing urban parks with active recreational uses. The scope of work includes concept and preliminary plans along with a neighborhood workshop to solicit feedback, design review meetings, and public hearings. The scope of work also includes full construction plans, specifications, and bid support.

Project Elements

The Community Workshop Plan (see Attachment) incorporates several improvements including a better defined picnic area with an eighteen-inch tall gabion and sandstone rock wall separating the field and benches. The sports court doubles in size to include two additional basketball hoops, and also supports a surface large enough for sports like mini five-a-side soccer (futsal). Two outdoor fitness equipment stations are located along a six-foot wide exercise path. The main entrance is simplified by merging an accessible path and maintenance driveway. The plan also includes new safety lighting. Although the turf area is reduced by the expansion of the sports court, there is still space for a small and large field.

A key consideration for the park is the feasibility of synthetic turf for the playing field to allow for better field conditions year-round. The existing natural turf (lawn) cannot withstand high intensity use and results in bare dirt at certain times of the year. After studying the cost, benefits, and aesthetic compatibility, it was determined artificial turf is not likely a good fit for this primarily natural neighborhood park. In addition, a significant artificial turf incomparability is the frequent large picnics that spill over into the field. Maintenance of natural turf would require a partial field closure schedule on a regular basis.

Community Input

A community workshop was held at the park on May 22, 2018. The workshop was advertised through bilingual direct mailers to over 800 Westside residents, signs posted at the park, and on Radio Bronco, a Spanish radio station. There were 14 participants at the community workshop, and park users were interviewed during a subsequent weekend site visit.

The workshop included a presentation of the concept plan and participants walked through the park to discuss each element. Voting cards allowed less vocal participants to provide input. Overall, participants were in favor of the presented improvements. Attendees suggested the design be flexible, as the park is used like the neighborhood's backyard, supporting large social gatherings as well as sports field activities. A less formal field space was requested to allow for different sports and overflow picnic gatherings. Requested improvements to the picnic area included a mix of additional small and large tables, more BBQ grills, and one reservable group area. Attendees suggested reducing outdoor fitness areas to accommodate more picnic sites. Expanding the sports court was well received as the basketball/handball court is very popular with adults. There were some concerns about site safety, followed by requests for improved lighting under the tree canopies and across the creek.

Revised Concept Plan

As a result of the workshop, SWA Group created the Revised Plan (see Attachment). The plan revisions include an expanded picnic area from nine to 19 tables at two new locations. The sports court is pushed closer to the street to create a one picnic area. A second new picnic area is created near the playground by replacing proposed outdoor fitness equipment with three picnic tables and ample paving to allow for a more flexible space. A proposed reservable picnic area will contain four tables that can be used by the public when not booked. BBQ grills are now included at most picnic sites. Better connectivity between the field and picnic area is accomplished by creating gaps in the rock wall.

Next Steps

The project will require Architectural Board of Review approval and assessment by the Planning Division. Without any significant obstacles, the Department anticipates design and Building Division permitting could be complete in early 2019.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The SWA Group contract amount, including a 10-percent contingency, is \$226,286 and funded through the Parks and Recreation Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Improvement Program. Although the Department does not have construction funding in place, completion of the

project plans and permits positions the Department to seek grant funding and request City General Fund allocations in 2019.

ATTACHMENT: Bohnett Park Concept Plan Comparison

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