



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: September 23, 2020

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Ortega Park Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission:

- A. Receive a presentation on the preliminary design of the Ortega Master Plan; and,
- B. Make the following findings pursuant to Santa Barbara Municipal Code Section 28.37.025:
 - 1. That the proposed park and recreation improvements are appropriate or necessary for the benefit of the community and visitors;
 - 2. That the proposed park and recreation facilities, including synthetic turf spots field, pool, skate park, multi-generational activity zone, playground, family and community gathering area, lighting, restroom, parking, and associated landscaping, will be compatible with the character of the neighborhood;
 - 3. 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;
 - 4. That the intensity of park use is appropriate and compatible with the character of the neighborhood;
 - 5. That the proposed park and recreation facilities are compatible with the scenic character of the City; and
 - 6. That the proposed structures or buildings are compatible with the neighborhood in terms of size, bulk, and scale or location; and
- C. Recommend that the Planning Commission approve the Ortega Master Plan Project.

DISCUSSION:

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the Parks and Recreation Commission with a

presentation of the preliminary design plans for the Ortega Master Plan, request the Commission make the findings pursuant to Santa Barbara Municipal Code Section 28.37.025, and recommend that the Planning Commission approve the Ortega Master Plan Project.

Background

Initiated in 2018, development of the Master Plan for Ortega Park included extensive community engagement through meetings, community workshops and on-site forums, an online survey, and presentations to the Parks and Recreation Commission, Neighborhood Advisory Council, and Architectural Board of Review. The Department used a variety of methods to provide advance notice of the meetings and encourage participation, including direct mailers and emails, on-site park and storefront posters, advertisements in local newspapers, and radio advertisements. Notifications were made in both English and Spanish, and Spanish language translation was made available at the workshops. More than 450 community members participated in the development of the Master Plan.

Project Description

The Ortega Master Plan (Project) will complete a full scale rehabilitation of the 5.46 acre Ortega Park with a synthetic turf field, new year-round pool that provides for instruction, lap swimming, aqua programs, children's slide, and splash play features, new park restroom facilities, enhanced community buildings, new playground and family picnic area, and a multi-generational activity zone with a skate park, basketball, bocce ball, corn hole, and other amenities. The Project includes site access and circulation improvements with pedestrian pathways surrounding and through the park, accessible entries, and expanded street parking. Ortega Park is a prime location due to its proximity to Santa Barbara Junior High School, various youth serving agencies, and the ability to meet the needs for existing and future residential development in the neighborhood.

The following discussion provides the Commission with detailed information about each of the park improvements.

Synthetic Turf Field: The construction of a synthetic turf field with lighting in the northern portion of the park will allow for both youth and adult soccer, youth baseball, rugby, lacrosse, and ultimate Frisbee, as well as drop-in play. The use of synthetic turf allows for year-round use, reduces water requirements, and requires a less intensive maintenance program than a natural grass field. The 360-foot-long and 180-foot-wide field will be maximized to allow the greatest playable surface while preserving mature trees on the eastern portion of the park.

Aquatic Facility: The proposed aquatic facility will address a significant unmet need for a community pool. An Aquatics Complex Feasibility Study completed in 2003 revealed a shortage of local aquatic facilities to adequately serve the public's demand for youth and

adult swim lessons, therapeutic instruction, recreation, and many other free and fee based aquatic activities and programs for residents.

The proposed facility includes a 26,870 square foot multi-purpose pool area featuring three distinct zones to accommodate year-round activities simultaneously. The pool area will include: wet play/wading pool; non-competitive lap pool; pool slide/play feature; and pool facility building with restrooms and showers. The existing Ortega Welcome House will be incorporated into the aquatic facility area. Constructed in 1952, the existing 1,650 square foot community building will be upgraded to provide access to the pool area as well as serve as a community gathering location.

Multi-Generational Recreation Zone and Skate Park: The Multi-Generational Activity Zone will be located at the southern corner of Ortega Park. The area will serve as a key day-to-day activator for the park and provide activities for various age ranges throughout the year. The area balances the various active uses by placing the more intensive uses (such as the skate park and basketball court) further from the edge of the street and placing the less intensive areas (i.e., corn hole, bocce ball, and ping pong) near the perimeter. To help reduce the heat-island effect of surface areas, the proposed design incorporates new shade trees with year-round interest. Site furnishings such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and bike racks will complement the overall circulation and design of the space.

The proposed skate park was developed by a professional skate park designer in collaboration with the local skating community during two workshops. During the first workshop, participants developed three dimensional conceptual designs using play clay materials. The second workshop included the presentation and refinement of the proposed design options.

Playground and Family Picnic Area: The Project includes an 11,370 square foot playground adjacent to a 2,300 square foot family picnic and plaza area. Located in the center of the park, the new area will serve as another activator for the park, providing recreation for children and families that may also be participating in other park activities. The central location will provide additional protection from vehicular and pedestrian traffic outside of the park, allowing parents to be able to keep a watchful eye on play areas.

Tree Removals Landscape: The Project proposes the removal of 40 trees, retention of 18 trees, and planting 108 new trees. Of the 40 trees proposed for removal, two are street trees, one is a setback tree, and 37 are park trees. Proposed tree replacement ratios exceed a 2:1 ratio. Once complete, the project site will have 126 trees. The proposed tree removals were reviewed by the Street Tree Advisory Committee on September 5, 2019 and approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission on September 24, 2019.

Gates and Fencing: The Project includes entry gates and a perimeter fence to allow the park to be secured after-hours. After hours use of the park for recreation activities would

be allowed in the park by Department permit only.

Street Lighting: The existing street lights surrounding the park are located at the corners and one mid-block, except for Salsipuedes Street. The project proposes to add one B-16 Slim Line Street Light mid-block on Salsipuedes Street. The project will also replace one street light mid-block on Ortega Street with a B-16 Slim Line Street Light per Public Works and City standards to provide safety and uniformity but avoid glare, light trespass, and over-lighting.

Security Lighting: On site security lighting will be provided by fifteen 14-foot pedestrian pole lights, a standard fixture in City parks. A photometric analysis was prepared for the project site. This analysis provides a point by point foot-candle plot on the site plan showing the illuminance to 20' beyond the property line. Minimum, average, and maximum foot-candles with uniformity ratios are provided in the illumination summary tables. These calculations demonstrate there is no impact to the adjacent residential uses.

Field Lighting: Field and court pole lighting were installed on site as early as 1965. In 2004, four 60-foot pole lights and two 40-foot pole lights illuminated the ballfield; however, they were removed due to maintenance issues. The Project proposes field lighting for the artificial turf fields to allow for evening play. The synthetic turf field will be illuminated by three 70 foot pole lights and three 60 foot pole lights. The six pole lights may not all be illuminated at once as some are only for the ballfield portion of the synthetic turf field. The basketball court will be illuminated by two 40 foot pole lights. Field lighting will be operated by special permit only and shall not be on past 10:00 pm.

Bicycle Parking: The Project will include long-term and short-term parking. Twenty-four (24) spaces will be installed for short-term park visitors and two long-term spaces (i.e. lockers) will be provided for park employees.

Street Right-of-Way and Parking: The Street Right-of Way Improvements were designed in conjunction with Public Works Transportation staff and include additional parking, loading areas, sidewalks (on Park land), and street lighting. The Project proposes to maximize available on-street parking by creating 90-degree nose-in parking on Salsipuedes Street (33 regular stalls and 2 ADA stalls) and reverse angle parking on Ortega Street (26 regular stalls and 4 ADA stalls), as well as three pick-up/drop-off zones in front of the Welcome House. Sidewalks will be installed within the park and adjacent to Ortega Street and Salsipuedes Street. Existing street lights will be retained and one additional light will be located mid-block on Salsipuedes Street to illuminate the new sidewalk.

Trash and Recycling: The project includes a trash enclosure for trash and recycling located mid-block along Ortega Street against the multi-sports field fence. A four cubic yard dumpster will store trash and a four cubic yard dumpster will hold recycling. A green

waste dumpster is not proposed, as the Department's standard procedure is to collect and remove all green waste from the site on the day it is generated.

Modification to Allow Parking in Front Setback: The Department is also requesting the Planning Commission approve a modification to allow parking in the front setback on Ortega and Salsipuedes Streets, required to improve off-site parking and passenger loading in the right-of-way. Currently, there are approximately 40 parallel parking spaces total on Ortega Street and Salsipuedes Street adjacent to the park and no passenger loading areas. The modification is required to meet minimum street widths, while provide 90-degree and angled parking. The modification will allow the vehicles to overhang into the Park property and increase parking from 40 spaces to 63 spaces with three new loading areas. Approval of the modification will accomplish increased parking, a key priority of community members during the development of master plan. As recommended by the Transportation Division, the Department will defer application of any restricted timed parking signage until after completion of the project. Once the park is operational for a period of time, it may be determined if there are any issues related to unrestricted parking, and the signage could be installed at that time.

Master Plan and Project Design Review

During development of the conceptual Master Plan, the Parks and Recreation Commission held a joint meeting with the Neighborhood Advisory Council on August 22, 2018. On November 14, 2018 and September 25, 2019, the Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the Master Plan and recommended advancing the preliminary design of the proposed park improvements. The City Council approved the Master Plan and authorized the next phase of Project development on January 8, 2019. The Architectural Board of Review (ABR) reviewed the Project on October 22, 2018, September 9, 2019, and May 4, 2020. On May 4, 2020, the ABR found that the Project met the Compatibility Analysis Criteria per SBMC 22.68.045.B.

Project Findings

In accordance with Santa Barbara Municipal Code 28.37 P-R Zone, the Parks and Recreation Commission is required to hold either a noticed public hearing or a public meeting to review and approve, conditionally approve, or deny park development and/or improvement applications based on the type of facility proposed. Although most of the proposed improvements to Ortega Park will replace existing amenities, the design and intent of the amenities as well as the expanded parking, new formal and informal lighting, new playground and picnic area, multi-generational activity zone and skate park, and the expanded aquatic facility require that the Commission both hold a public hearing and make the required findings specified in Section 28.37.025. These findings include:

1. That the proposed park and recreation improvements are appropriate or necessary for the benefit of the community and visitors;

2. That the proposed park and recreation facilities, including synthetic turf spots field, pool, skate park, multi-generational activity zone, playground, family and community gathering area, lighting, restroom, parking, and associated landscaping, will be compatible with the character of the neighborhood;
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5. That the proposed park and recreation facilities are compatible with the scenic character of the City; and
6. That the proposed structures or buildings are compatible with the neighborhood in terms of size, bulk, and scale or location.

Next Steps

The Planning Division of the Community Development Department is currently completing environmental review of the Project in preparation for a Planning Commission hearing. Although a date is not yet set, it is anticipated that the hearing could occur in late October or early November. With Planning Commission approval, the Department will proceed with completing final plans and construction specifications. Depending on funding, project construction could begin in summer 2022. The Project will be constructed in three phases. Phase 1 (4 months) including Street Right-of-Way Improvements, Phase 2 (8 months), includes demolition grading and sports field development, and Phase 3 (14 months) includes construction of pool facility, all buildings, skate park and courts.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Funding for the project to date includes \$440,000 from the General Fund for development of the Master Plan and preparation of the preliminary design and a \$146,363 Community Development Block Grant for the design of the Street Right of Way improvements. There are \$250,000 in Fiscal Year 21 Measure C funds to complete final design and construction drawings for the park improvements. Although full funding is not yet secured for project construction, the Department recently submitted a \$1 million grant application to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) under the Land and Water Conservation grant program and will be submitting another grant application to State Parks in November for Proposition 68 grant funds.

ATTACHMENT: Ortega Master Plan Preliminary Design Sheets L1-L10

PREPARED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director