

City of Piedmont
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: January 22, 2019

TO: City Council

FROM: Paul Benoit, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Consideration of the Adoption of the Proposed Linda Beach Conceptual Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the proposed Linda Beach Conceptual Master Plan.

BACKGROUND

Linda Beach Playfield & Park sits adjacent to Egbert W. Beach School and has been an active play space for roughly a century. The current playfield has seen significant transformation in recent decades from 1989 when natural grass replaced a bi-level asphalt playground and basketball court to 2004 when artificial turf replaced the natural grass. However, the spaces surrounding the field have received very little attention over the years. In particular, the area adjacent to the Oakland Avenue Bridge has never been developed and the bathroom building is outdated, not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, and in need of renovation. During its deliberations in the spring of 2016, the Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) Review Committee discussed the need for improvements to Linda Beach tot lot. The tot lot is recognized as one of the most used and appreciated City recreation facilities. Unfortunately, this facility suffers from old and outdated equipment as well as lack of ready access to bathrooms.

The CIP Review Committee recommended the City Council take a broader view than simply replacing tot lot equipment and suggested a master plan be undertaken to address all areas of the park from the Oakland Avenue Bridge to Beach School, from Howard Avenue to Linda Avenue with the exception of the playing field. After a thorough Request for Proposals process, Council awarded a contract to Groundworks Office, Landscape Architects on September 5, 2017 to develop the Linda Beach Conceptual Master Plan.

The intent of the Conceptual Master Plan is to create a logical and flexible plan to meet the present and future needs of the City of Piedmont within the context of the neighborhood, the needs of the community, and the constraints of the existing site. The goal of the project is to fully address and optimize the various uses of the park, both for scheduled and unscheduled activity, as well as, to serve a diversity of interests for Piedmonters of all ages. New uses and activities based on public input and City needs are being considered, as is the desire to significantly improve the aesthetic quality of the park. Additionally, the Conceptual Master Plan is being

developed to integrate seamlessly with the existing artificial turf field and the area under the Oakland Avenue Bridge.

This project kicked off with a well-attended community meeting on November 16, 2017 in the Beach School auditorium where community members shared their positive and negative perceptions of the existing park as well as their wishes for future improvements. Based on this feedback, Groundworks presented three conceptual ideas at a second community meeting on January 18, 2018. Robust feedback from this meeting, combined with an online survey which received over 250 responses, guided Groundworks to develop a preliminary conceptual plan which was presented to the Recreation Commission, the Park Commission and to City Council in March, April, and May of 2018, respectively. In addition, a meeting for neighbors of Linda Beach Park was held in April in order to provide a forum for those who live closest to the park to share their feedback on the developing concept.

Based on robust community input at these four meetings, twelve guiding principles were developed and widely distributed in June as a framework for making revisions to the conceptual plan. In response to neighborhood concerns, the skate spot was removed from the Conceptual Master Plan and a subcommittee of the Recreation Commission was formed in May to study other spaces to serve a clearly articulated need for safe and accessible skating in Piedmont. Neighbors also voiced concerns about noise associated with pickleball. The issue of how and where to best serve the emerging community desire for pickleball in Piedmont is being examined by another subcommittee of the Recreation Commission as a broader community recreation issue.

Out of this process, staff and Groundworks forged over-arching design goals that balanced community input, recreation programming needs, and City park improvement goals. These became the major design goals for this Conceptual Master Plan:

1. Creation of a unified “family zone” that promotes activities for various ages where parents/caregivers can enjoy and observe multiple activities at once.
2. Creation of additional and flexible recreation programming space to address unfulfilled programming needs for community members of all ages.
3. Transformation of the current park into a more aesthetically pleasing and unified landscape plan.

With these design goals and the framework as guides, Groundworks Office developed the next iteration of the Conceptual Master Plan which was reviewed by the Park Commission and Recreation Commission at a joint meeting on September 5, 2018 and was presented on September 12 at a Beach Neighbors meeting hosted by the City at Beach School Auditorium. Commissioners indicated overall support for the revised concept and acknowledged Groundworks for their responsiveness to neighborhood and Commission concerns expressed the previous spring. Neighbors voiced appreciation for adjustments made in the revised concept but also voiced concerns about the location of the tot lot at the south end of the park near the bridge. Based on Commission direction to staff as well as neighborhood feedback, Groundworks Office together with City staff developed another revised iteration of a conceptual plan for Linda Beach Park (exhibit A).

A summary of the distinguishing attributes of the revised plan are as follows:

- A “California Playscape” designed with landscape buffers near the Oakland Avenue Bridge and along Howard Avenue fills the now dormant south end of the park with natural adventure play for all ages
- A new enclosed tot lot (~4,000 sq. ft.) for children age three and younger at the north end of the park within the existing tot lot footprint
- New restrooms to serve the tot lot, flex space and tennis courts on the north end of the park
- A sport court flex space adjacent to the north end tot lot serves as multipurpose outdoor recreation program space for all ages
- An artificial turf bocce ball court makes efficient use of space required for ADA access grading between Linda Avenue and the tennis courts
- Multiple picnic areas suitable for small family gatherings
- New modern and ADA accessible restrooms and storage at the south end
- Significant landscape buffers at the south end of the park
- Improved access and circulation including two ADA entrances from Linda Avenue; stair access from the north end of the pedestrian path near Beach School to the tot lot; and stair access from the tennis courts to the sports field
- Retention of the notable trees on site including the Melaleucas along Linda Avenue and the mature redwoods below the playfield
- Two tennis courts with north-south orientation and slightly larger offsets than existing courts
- The use of permeable surfaces for hardscape areas and paths to create options for green infrastructure and appropriate storm water treatment options to be integrated into the landscape
- A phased approach to the project allowing for the long neglected south end of the park to be constructed first
- Fencing plan allows for controlling park use after hours
- A potential third phase of the project adds a multi-purpose recreation building to the northwest corner of the park expanding indoor recreation programming opportunities for Piedmonters of all ages (bridge, mahjong, book club, yoga, art, lego, knitting, carpentry, ballet etc.)
- The potential phase three building also creates an indoor/outdoor interface to accommodate robust and complete full day summer camp offerings as well as after school enrichment activities and small evening and weekend gatherings

This revised iteration was presented and overwhelmingly well received at a joint meeting of the Recreation and Park Commissions on November 7, 2018. At that meeting, the Joint Park Commission and Recreation Commission unanimously recommended moving the Conceptual Master Plan presented by Groundworks be forwarded to the City Council for review.

Attachments: A) Site Plan

By: Sara Lillevand, Recreation Director

