



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT: 1343 THE ALAMEDA PARK  
MASTER PLAN AND NAMING**

**DATE:** August 22, 2022

Approved

Date

**9/1/2022**

**COUNCIL DISTRICT: 6**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) Adopt City of San José 1343 The Alameda Master Plan Report for a new public park.
- (b) Adopt “The Alameda Park” as the official park name as recommended by staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission and as a result of a public outreach process.

## **OUTCOME**

Approval of the City of San José 1343 The Alameda Master Plan Report and park name will facilitate the design, construction, and official naming of a future 0.17-acre pocket park located at 1343 The Alameda. Development of the site will provide a range of recreational opportunities and is expected to create an inviting public space that strengthens the sense of community in the Shasta Hanchett Park neighborhood.

## **BACKGROUND**

The future 0.17-acre park site is located at 1343 The Alameda in the Shasta Hanchett Park neighborhood. The site is currently a parking lot at the corner of The Alameda and Hanchett Avenue. The City of San José (City) purchased the site on July 27, 2018, to develop a park and enhance public life within The Alameda Urban Village.

The site will be developed into a pocket park. A pocket park is a small outdoor space, usually no more than one-fourth of an acre, that provides a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members.

Four neighborhood-serving parks are within a three-fourths of mile radius of the site:

- Theodore Lenzen Park
- Cahill Park
- Hester Park, and
- Municipal Rose Garden

The existing parks offer a range of recreational amenities including basketball courts, picnic areas with barbeques, large turf areas, and youth and tot lots. This pocket park is designed to include features that are not found in nearby existing parks.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Master Plan reflects community input received at several workshops, conforms with the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (Department) Park Design Guidelines, and aligns with the guiding principles within the Department's Strategic Plan, Activate SJ:

- Stewardship,
- Nature,
- Equity and Access,
- Identity, and
- Public Life.

## **Master Plan**

Through public workshops, as noted in the Public Outreach section of this memorandum, the community provided input on park programming, which informed the Master Plan (Attachment A). The Department worked closely with community advocates and City Council staff to engage the community through a series of online surveys and online workshops while adhering to County of Santa Clara guidance on COVID-19 protocols. Table 1 identifies community input and how the plan addresses those needs or expectations. Table 2 explains how specific site details are to be resolved during design development.

**Table 1 – Input and Master Plan Approach**

<b>Community Requests</b>	<b>Response to Requests</b>
Landmark for the Shasta Hanchett Park Neighborhood	Architectural features and bright colors will visually serve as a landmark for the Shasta Hanchett Park neighborhood.
Passive and active recreation experiences for all visitors	Range of seating and table options, game tables, play structures featuring musical elements, and flexible spaces for community events.
Green Space	Street trees will be replaced along Hanchett Avenue. Onsite design will include tree groves and pollinator gardens.
Safety and Maintenance	Install perimeter fence, screen fence between properties, ambient lighting, durable and easy to maintain amenities, and low-growing, maintenance-friendly plant material. Clear sight lines for monitoring day and night.

**Table 2 – Preferred Park Elements**

<b>Community Requests</b>	<b>Approach Responding to Requests</b>
Shade Structures	Provide shade over tables and stage area that establish an architectural element and landmark.
Picnic Areas, Seating Areas, and Open Space	Install seat walls to frame the park and offer flexible seating areas, multiple picnic tables within a tree lined grove near the primary street (The Alameda), and a small turf area and stage for leisure activities and community events.
Play Areas	Include game tables and structures featuring musical play

The community demonstrated support for the park layout and features defined in the Master Plan while expressing concerns about neighborhood safety and the City’s capacity to maintain the park. The Master Plan guides development of the park site that is easily monitored from two sides, providing durable equipment and landscape that is sustainable and drought tolerant. Improvements are within the anticipated level of funding allocated by the City Council for park maintenance.

**Official Park Naming**

City Council Policy Number 7-5, Naming of City-Owned Land and Facilities (Policy 7-5), establishes guidelines and procedures regarding naming City-owned land and facilities that are not public streets. Per the policy, official names must be reflective of one of the following criteria:

- a. Geographic location;
- b. Prominent geographic feature or local reference point;

- c. Adjoining subdivision/community;
- d. Historical event;
- e. An individual who has made significant contributions to San José, the State, the Nation, or the World and who has been deceased for at least five years;
- f. An individual via a donation or sponsorship agreement; and/or
- g. A group via a donation or sponsorship agreement.

Additionally, Policy 7-5 encourages names that reflect the City’s ethnic and cultural diversity. Staff recommends names that reflect the policy’s intention as well as names that align with the City’s commitment to racial equity<sup>1</sup>.

Staff received 88 name suggestions in the first online survey, with 75 qualifying names that aligned with Policy 7-5. Similar and redundant name suggestions were combined to allow the public to vote on a qualified list of name options (Attachment B). Three names received the highest votes: Shasta Hanchett Park, Hanchett Park, and The Alameda Park. These three names were presented in the third and final voting survey (Table 3).

**Table 3 – Park Naming Results of Survey #3, Final Voting Survey**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Hanchett Park	42.37%	25
The Alameda Park	33.90%	20
Shasta Hanchett Park	23.73%	14

After the survey closed, a community member expressed concern that the name “Hanchett Park” might have implications that do not align with the City’s commitment to racial equity. As a result, staff researched the history related to the name “Hanchett” (Attachment C). This research did not conclusively confirm or eliminate concerns. To avoid a possible conflict with the City’s racial equity practices, staff recommends naming the park after the existing street and Business District.

Staff recommends City Council adopt “The Alameda Park” as the official park name to align with Policy 7-5 (prominent geographic location and history). This name is recommended for approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Alameda (also referred to as “The Beautiful Way<sup>2</sup>”) has a rich and complex history.

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<sup>1</sup> City of San Jose Office of the City Manager: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/office-of-the-city-manager/office-of-racial-equity>

<sup>2</sup> The first known reference to the Alameda as “The Beautiful Way” was in the 1878 poem, “An Arboreal Song of the Alameda (The Beautiful Way)”: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t5p84vf0t&view=1up&seq=16&skin=2021>

The Alameda is a portion of the El Camino Real, or “Royal Road,” a 600-mile route connecting the 21 Spanish California missions<sup>3</sup>. The Alameda was built to connect the Pueblo of San José with the Mission of Santa Clara de Asís. Beginning around 1795, the road was built by the labor of approximately 200 Ohlone Native American neophytes of Mission Santa Clara under orders of Father Magin Catala. In 1797, Father Catala conceived of the idea of planting willow trees along The Alameda with the idea of creating a beautiful, shaded promenade. Wealthy residents built prominent mansions along the corridor in the 1880s and early 1900s. Today, The Alameda is a major thoroughfare and vibrant business corridor.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff conducted robust community outreach for the Master Plan and park naming which will guide the development of the park. The approved Master Plan will allow City staff to proceed with design and construction of this park.

## **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Approval of the Master Plan will enable staff to proceed with design of the park. Staff will return to City Council for the approval of bid and award for the future construction project.

## **CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSÉ**

The recommendation in this memorandum aligns with one or more Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

## **POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

***Alternative #1: Select an alternative park name from the list of eligible names generated through the public outreach process.***

**Pros:** City Council could adopt a name from the list of qualifying names received during the Department’s public surveys (refer to Attachment B for the list of qualifying names). “Hanchett Park” and “Shasta Hanchett Park” were the first and third most preferred names in the Department’s public surveys. “Hanchett Park” would honor the surrounding neighborhood and Hanchett Avenue which is along the southern boundary of the park. “Shasta Hanchett Park” would reference the nearby Shasta Hanchett neighborhood and Shasta Avenue.

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<sup>3</sup> El Camino Real (California): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_Camino\\_Real\\_\(California\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Camino_Real_(California))

**Cons:** City Council would be selecting a name other than the one recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission and Department staff.

**Reason for not recommending:** “The Alameda Park” is recommended by staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission. In addition, the “Hanchett Park” and the “Shasta Hanchett Park” name options may not align with the City’s commitment to racial equity.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The community engagement process included a comprehensive outreach effort to ensure public needs or expectations were solicited and incorporated into the Master Plan. Table 4 and Table 5 list the community outreach workshops, and online surveys conducted by the Department.

**Table 4 – Community Workshops**

<b>Workshop</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
<b>#1</b>	Gathering Programmatic Data and Park Naming	April 15, 2021	35
<b>#2</b>	Present and Evaluate Two Design Options and Park Naming	July 12, 2021	14
<b>#3</b>	Present and Evaluate Preferred Design and Park Naming	November 17, 2021	20

**Table 5 – Public Online Surveys**

<b>Workshop</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
<b>#1</b>	Gathering programmatic data and park name suggestion survey	April 15, 2021 to April 30, 2021	167
<b>#2</b>	Present and evaluate two design options and park naming survey	July 12, 2021 to July 27, 2021	98
<b>#3</b>	Present and evaluate preferred design and final park naming survey	November 17, 2021 to December 3, 2021	66

The City offered language translation for all public workshops via the public workshop flyers. The flyers were translated into Spanish. Staff did not receive any requests for translation so there

were no translation services provided during the public workshops. The public was notified of the workshops via:

- Postcard notices mailed to residents and property owners within 1,000 feet of the site; and
- Electronic notices provided via the City Council District 6 office, the Shasta Hanchett Park Neighborhood Association, social media including Facebook and Nextdoor.com, the Department's email distribution list, Park Advocates, and the Parks Foundation social media platforms.

### **COORDINATION**

This project has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the City Manager's Budget Office, and the Department of Planning Building and Code Enforcement.

### **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT**

The Parks and Recreation Commission considered the Master Plan and park name on June 1, 2022. Design input included:

- Revisit landscape plan to increase green softscape and reduce heat island effect; and
- Consider replacing synthetic turf with a native or natural ground cover.

Commissioner Ames moved to accept the Master Plan and park name. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Choy. The motion carried (7-0-3). Absent: Commissioners Snider, Villarreal, and Vega.

### **FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT**

Development of the site align with public park and recreation goals of the *Envision San José 2040 General Plan*, City Council Policy 7-5, Naming of City-Owned Land and Facilities, and *ActivateSJ*, the Department's Strategic Plan.

### **COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

Approval of the Master Plan will have no cost implications. The 2020-2021 Adopted Capital Budget, approved by City Council in June 2020, allocated funding of \$200,000 (Hanchett Park Master Plan) in the Parks Trust Fund, that is currently budgeted in 2022-2023 in the amount of \$8,000 for preparation of a Master Plan and construction documents and \$2,427,000 (Hanchett Park Reserve) in the Council District 6 Construction and Conveyance Tax Fund for the construction of the park. The operating and maintenance costs will be reviewed as part of the 2024-2028 Five-Year Forecast.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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**CEQA**

Categorically Exempt, ER22-0179 CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Cicirelli". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JON CICIRELLI

Director, Department of Parks,

Recreation and Neighborhood Services

The principal author of this memorandum was Hayde Pacheco, Parks Manager. For questions, please contact by email at [hayde.pacheco@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:hayde.pacheco@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 793-4197.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A. Master Plan (Final)

Attachment B. Analysis of Name Suggestions

Attachment C. Research Findings on Lewis E. Hanchett (1872-1956)