



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: April 13, 2021

Approved

Date

04/15/21

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3

SUBJECT: MASTER PLAN FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AT NORTH SAN PEDRO AND BASSETT STREETS

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Adopt a resolution adopting the North San Pedro and Bassett Street Parks Master Plan Addendum to the Downtown Strategy 2040 Environmental Impact Report in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.
- (b) Approve the Master Plan that guides development of two neighborhood parks in downtown San José, at North San Pedro Street and Bassett Street.

OUTCOME

Approval will provide a Master Plan to guide the design and development of two neighborhood parks, with the working titles, “North San Pedro Park” and “Bassett Park.” Development of the two sites will provide a range of both active and passive recreation opportunities and create distinctive and inviting public spaces in Downtown’s North San Pedro neighborhood.

BACKGROUND

The subject parks are planned for Downtown’s North San Pedro neighborhood. The neighborhood is rapidly developing. Approximately 2,900 residential units are either under construction or planned for the near future in the area. Housing options are not fully planned but may range from town homes to micro unit co-living.

- North San Pedro Park is located within vacated public right-of-way between Old West Julian Street and Bassett Street. The future park site is 0.89 acres in size. The site will be

framed on both the east and west side by new multi-family homes now under construction.

- Bassett Park is located partially underneath the Coleman Avenue overpass on the north side of Bassett Street and extends westward to San Pedro Street. The site has street frontage along Bassett Street and San Pedro Street, with an active railway to the north and a private roadway to the east.

The North San Pedro Park site was until recently used for construction staging of the adjacent residential development. The City has an Easement Agreement that requires the developer to sustain the fencing and prevents public access until future park construction. The Bassett Park site is also fenced to prevent access and the City is responsible for sustaining that fencing and the site conditions.

The 2017-2018 Adopted Capital Budget allocated \$500,000 to complete the Master Planning process for the three North San Pedro Area Parks: Pellier Park, North San Pedro Park and Bassett Park. The Pellier Park Master Plan was presented independently to the Parks and Recreation Commission on October 2, 2019 and adopted by Council on December 10, 2019. The North San Pedro and Bassett Park sites required additional environmental documentation, which is now complete as an Addendum to the Downtown Strategy 2040 Environmental Impact Report.

The City Council directed staff to seek a \$1.3 million grant, via the State of California's Department of Housing and Development under the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Grant Program, to supplement the available capital funding. (Council Agenda - 10/17/2017 / Item 5.1). The City secured the grant to support preparation of the subject Master Plan, design and construction of the three North San Pedro Area Parks. The AHSC grant program requires that the projects must be completed, and all grant-related expenses invoiced no later than April 1, 2023.

ANALYSIS

In preparing the Master Plan, staff engaged the community and considered how the parks related as a collection of recreational experiences. The parks were presented along with Pellier Park, a previously master planned park, to help the community consider opportunities presented by North San Pedro Area Parks.

Park	Theme	Assets	Identity
North San Pedro Park	Live	Tree grove, multi-level seating, paved paseo	Pop-up areas for food trucks or other temporary vendors
Bassett Park	Play	Play equipment, exercise equipment, climbing wall	Lighted public art installation
Pellier Park	Relax	Community table, turf, paved paseo, history wall	Artist-created site plan and wall display

The Master Plan for North San Pedro Park and Bassett Park provides for a balanced park system in the area. There are three existing neighborhood-serving parks and one regional park located within a ¾ mile radius of the two future parks: Ryland Park, John P. McEnery Park, Plaza de César Chávez and St. James Park. Together they offer a variety of uses, including active recreation such as basketball, swimming, water play and tot and youth play areas, as well as more passive uses, including picnic and seating for quiet contemplation.

Three community meetings were held to support preparation of the Master Plan. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (the Department) typically hosts three meetings with the following outcomes:

- Meeting # 1: Provide general background, discuss opportunities and constraints, gather public feedback and preferences;
- Meeting #2: Present options resulting from public input and facilitate conversation to focus on preferences and design adjustments; and
- Meeting #3: Present a preferred alternative, fine-tune as needed, seek buy-in.

At the first meeting, staff collected community priorities and preferences. An online survey replicated questions asked at the meeting, and supported participation by persons unable to attend the meeting.

The most desired program elements for North San Pedro Park were space for a farmer's market, paseo lighting and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Program elements requested for Bassett Park were an up-lit tree grove, shaded public "living room," active recreation space, painted paved surfaces, a climbing element, play structures and skate elements. Notably, in the portion of the survey allowing open-ended responses and comments, some respondents expressed strong concerns about the inclusion of skate elements due to noise. All responses to a question about amenities in Bassett Park included references to a desire for lighting. Staff received the community's input and developed a plan that is feasible in context of site constraints, including the presence of underground utilities that limit plantings and reserving space for emergency fire access which prevents improvements adjacent to multi-story homes.

In response to an open-ended question about what character best describes the neighborhood, almost half of respondents included references to the urban, modern and/or futuristic nature of the area. Several responses also referenced the area's history and the desire to celebrate it through the design of the parks. Seventeen of nineteen respondents stated that landscaping was either important or very important and several responses stated the need for trees and plants to provide a respite from the urban nature of the area.

Based on feedback from the first community meeting and responses to the online survey, alternative park concepts were presented at the second community meeting. In response to feedback at that meeting, the concepts were refined, resulting in the master plans presented at the third and final community meeting. The final Master Plan incorporated the following changes based on community feedback at the second meeting:

North San Pedro Park

- Green space increased by 16%
- Wayfinding added to reinforce connection to other parks
- Enhanced gateway feature with unifying signage

Bassett Park

- Green space increased by 12%
- Space allocated for a grove of trees
- Climbing wall lowered to be more approachable for novice and children's use

Both park concept plans were very well received by the participants at the third community meeting.

The Master Plan reports that the future estimated cost for project development will be approximately \$4.1 million for North San Pedro Park and \$2.2 million for Bassett Park.

North San Pedro Park and Bassett Park are working titles and are subject to the City's park naming approval process. Staff will return to the Commission to seek input on name recommendations to be brought forward to the City Council at a future date. Park signage will reflect the approved names.

Attachment A presents the draft Master Plan document. If approved by Council, the document will be finalized after incorporating any requested edits.

CONCLUSION

Staff conducted robust community outreach for the Master Plan which will guide development of the two parks. The parks will be designed to support residents and visitors as they seek to Play and Live in the North San Pedro Park Area. The approved Master Plan will allow City staff to proceed with design and construction of both parks in order to meet the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant deadline.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Approval of the Master Plan will enable staff to design and construct the two parks. Staff will return to Council for the approval of bid and awards for future construction.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSÉ

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

PUBLIC OUTREACH

In 2018, the Department engaged the landscape architectural services of SWA Group to collaborate on the planning effort. The community engagement program included three in-person community meetings and an on-line survey. The community meetings were conducted at City Hall which is located about 0.6 miles from the project sites. Community outreach is summarized below:

Venue	Purpose	Date	Participants
Community Meeting #1	Gather Community Priorities and Preferences	11/15/2018	8
Online Survey	Gather Community Priorities and Preferences	11/19/2018-11/30/2018	23
Community Meeting #2	Present Park Concepts, Review Alternatives, Collect Feedback	01/29/2019	Number not recorded
Community Meeting #3	Present Master Plan, Collect Feedback	03/26/2019	10

The public was notified of the workshops via:

- Notices mailed to residents and property owners within 500 feet of the park sites.
- Notices and reminders via social media, including the Department's Facebook page.

COORDINATION

This project has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the City Manager's Budget Office, and the Department of Public Works.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

The Parks and Recreation Commission heard this item on November 4, 2020 and approved the recommendation to accept the Master Plan and advise City Council to approve the Master Plan. The motion carried. (7-0-1). Absent: Commissioner Vega.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

Development of the site aligns with public park and recreation goals of the *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* and *ActivateSJ*, the Department's Strategic Plan.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The project is supported in part by a \$1.3 million grant awarded from the State of California's Department of Housing and Development under the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program and supplements available capital funding. Additional \$1.9 million was allocated during the 2019-2020 Annual Report to the North San Pedro Area Parks Reserve. The total available funding in fiscal year 2020-2021 is \$2.7 million in the North San Pedro Area Parks Reserve along with \$660,000 available in the North San Pedro Area Parks Master Plan appropriation.

The new North San Pedro Area Parks Reserve balance is now \$2.6 million for future site construction. The master plan identifies the following cost to design and construction of the two parks:

- \$4.1 million for North San Pedro Park
- \$2.2 million for Bassett Park

Staff will bring forward funding options to the City Council to close the estimated \$3.7 million funding gap needed for park development. Staff expects to report back once design work for one or both parks near completion and more precise project estimate(s) are available.

CEQA

Addendum to the Downtown Strategy 2040 Final Environmental Report (Resolution No. 78942), File No. PP20-001.

/s/

JON CICIRELLI

Director, Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services Department

For questions please contact Nicolle Burnham, Deputy Director, at nicolle.burnham@sanjoseca.gov.

Attachment: North San Pedro Park and Bassett Park Master Plan