



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jon Cicirelli
Matt Loesch

SUBJECT: See Below

DATE: April 6, 2026

Approved

Date:

4/16/2026

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 9

SUBJECT: Park Master Plan and Official Name for a Future Park Located Along Rinconada Drive

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Approve the Park Master Plan for a future Chartered Park that will be located at the terminus of Rinconada Drive, adjacent to Almaden Expressway and Curtner Avenue off-ramp.
- (b) Adopt "Bill Kee Park" as the official name for the park as recommended by staff, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and as a result of the public outreach process.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

Approval of the Park Master Plan and adoption of the name of a new park within the Canoas Garden and Almaden neighborhood will establish a Chartered Park at this location once the site is constructed and open to the public.¹

BACKGROUND

The 1.2-acre park site is located at the end of Rinconada Drive (APN 456-25-003), about 900 feet northeast of Ironwood Drive. It sits next to the Almaden Expressway and

¹ A chartered public park refers to City land which has been dedicated, improved, and opened to the public for park purposes, City Charter Section 17000 referenced in "Report on the City Charter Regarding Parks," March 25, 2025, <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13931571&GUID=793754C1-6134-4030-BF0E-C96BDBB18FAC>

the Curtner Avenue off-ramp. The site is on the western edge of the South San José Planning Area, in the northeast corner of Council District 9.²

The parkland was dedicated by the adjacent residential project to satisfy the parkland obligation under the Parkland Dedication Ordinance and the Parkland Impact Ordinance.³ The site was deeded to the City of San José in 2013 and has remained undeveloped since then. The site will now be built as a neighborhood park with green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) and new recreational space for nearby residents.

ANALYSIS

Park Master Plan

This project will turn a 1.2-acre site into a neighborhood park that serves multiple community and environmental purposes. The park will include GSI to help improve water quality. GSI means using natural systems, like plants and soil, to manage and clean stormwater at its source before it reaches local waterways. The GSI component is funded through the Measure T Bond, a General Obligation Bond⁴ approved by San José voters in 2018 to repair and upgrade City infrastructure, including stormwater improvements. The Measure T funding supports the construction of the GSI facility and enables the City to develop the site as a neighborhood park with recreational amenities, creating both environmental benefits and community open space. The park design was shaped by community input and follows the City's long-term plans and park design guidelines.

The site is located next to the Almaden Expressway off-ramp and near the point where water flows into the Guadalupe River. This location makes it well-suited for features that treat and clean stormwater before it reaches the river. Rainwater from nearby homes and businesses flows over hard surfaces such as streets and sidewalks, collecting pollutants like dirt, trash, oil, and heavy metals along the way.

The park will include a bio-retention system designed to capture and treat this polluted runoff. Once filtered, the treated water slowly infiltrates into the ground to recharge the aquifer, while any excess is directed through an underground pipe system to safely flow

²The South San José Planning area is generally bounded by Story Road and Phelan Avenue to the north, Highway 101 to the east, Coyote Road, Senter Road, and Capital Expressway to the south, and Almaden Expressway to the west.

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/23683/636689360809370000>

³ The Latitude 37 residential development project, located on Babb Court, dedicated the land, Parkland Agreement File No. PA 06-017689, executed on August 29, 2006.

⁴ Measure T Community Oversight Committee, approved November 6, 2018:

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/public-works/capital-improvement-program-cip/measure-t-community-oversight-committee>

into the Guadalupe River. This system will help protect fish and wildlife, improve river water quality, and replenish groundwater beneath the site.

In addition to improving water quality, the park will support local wildlife. Pollinator gardens, new trees, and native plants will create habitat, increase biodiversity, and provide shade for park users.

The park will also include a youth playground, picnic areas, open lawn space, a walking loop, landscaping, fencing, security lighting, and educational signage. Together, these features will create a safe and welcoming space where people of all ages can stay active, relax, and learn about the environment. The proposed park layout and amenities are illustrated in Attachment A – Master Plan Report.

Maintenance responsibilities for the project will be divided between departments. The Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department will maintain the park areas outside of the bio-retention area. The Transportation Department will maintain the bio-retention system and associated stormwater treatment infrastructure.

Official Park Naming

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

- Geographic location;
- Prominent geographic feature or local reference point;
- Adjoining subdivision/community;
- Historical event;
- 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;
- An individual via a donation or sponsorship agreement; or
- A group via a donation or sponsorship agreement.

Additionally, Policy 7-5 encourages names that reflect the City's ethnic and cultural diversity. Staff will recommend names that reflect the intention of Policy 7-5 as well as names that align with the City's Racial Equity commitment, which aims for residents from all backgrounds and identities to feel that they matter and belong.⁵

Staff finds that naming the park "Bill Kee Park" aligns with the City's naming policy, the majority of online survey results, and the City's objective for an inclusive and equitable park system.

⁵ Equity Values and Standards Policy, City Council Policy 0-22, RES2024—140, Item 3.5(b), 5/14/2024: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/114681/638627814182830000>

“Bill Kee Park” will honor Bill Kee (1902-1989), a Chinese American businessman and community leader who made important contributions to San José during a time when Chinese Americans faced widespread discrimination.⁶

From 1939 to 1947, Bill Kee worked to support both the Chinese American community and the broader San José community. He led efforts to preserve the Ng Shing Gung Temple (built in 1888) until its demolition in 1949.⁷ This temple was the last remaining building from Heinlerville Chinatown, an important part of San José history.⁸ Although his efforts helped delay demolition and brought public attention to the temple’s importance, the City ultimately declared the building unsafe and demolished it in 1949.⁹

Bill Kee managed the National Dollar Store, one of the only Chinese-owned and operated department stores in the area at that time. He was also active in the local business community, including the San José Better Business Bureau, the San José Chamber of Commerce, and the San José Rotary Club.

Figure 1: Image of Bill Kee



Newspaper clipping from the San José Evening News, June 8, 1939, announcing Bill Kee’s appointment as manager of the National Dollar Store

⁶ Bill Kee obituary, “Bill Kee, 86, Longtime Oakland Leader, Dies,” Asian Week, published April 21, 1989, page 31: <https://database.asianweek.com/paperPage?date=1989-04-21&page=31&esId=UbZPxXwB8Q5arktDsXvW>

⁷ “History of the Ng Shing Gung,” Chinese American Historical Museum at the Ng Shing Gung, History San José: <https://historysanjose.org/plan-your-visit/history-park/chinese-american-historical-museum-at-the-ng-shing-gung/>

⁸ Heinlerville Chinatown, Chinese Historical and Cultural Project (CHCP): <https://chcp.org/Heinlerville-Chinatown>

⁹ “Chinatown, San José, USA,” by Connie Young Yu, 1991 (page 111): <https://archive.org/details/chinatownsanjose0000yuco/page/110/mode/2up?q=Bill+Kee>

Policy Alternatives

Park Master Plan Alternative #1: *City Council could reject the Park Master Plan.*

Pros: Redrafting the Park Master Plan could result in an alternative design.

Cons: The planned park reflects input from the community. Awarding the project would be delayed, which will not adhere to San Francisco Baykeeper-City of San José Consent Decree deadline. The construction of the new park would be delayed.

Reason for not recommending: The Park Master Plan is consistent with the existing park master plan, public input, and the Parks and Recreation Commission. The improvements create a quality park with public amenities designed to support the community.

Park Naming Alternative #2: *The City Council could select an alternative park name from the list of eligible names generated through the public outreach process.*

Pros: The City Council could adopt a different name from the list of qualifying names received through the public outreach process. Bill Kee Park, Wester Sweet Park, Tulares Park, Curtner Park, Rinconada Park, and Kell Park were considered in the public survey and would honor local reference points and deceased individuals.

Cons: The City would be selecting a name other than the one recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the results of the community surveys.

Reason for not recommending: The name of “Bill Kee Park” is consistent with public input and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Racial Equity Impact Analysis

The proposed Park Master Plan supports the City’s racial equity goals by providing a new neighborhood park space that is accessible and welcoming to residents of diverse backgrounds. Community input helped shape the park design through public meetings and multilingual outreach. Surveys were provided in four languages based on the site’s demographics: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. The project’s outreach list included various community-based organizations representing the diverse community in San José. The park amenities are designed to serve people of different ages and abilities while providing environmental benefits through the integration of green stormwater infrastructure and native landscaping.

The name, “Bill Kee Park,” represents a Chinese American businessman and community leader who made important contributions to the Chinese American community and the broader San José community during a time of widespread discrimination against Chinese Americans.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Approval of the Park Master Plan will enable staff to proceed with the design and construction of the park. Design is anticipated to be completed in the second quarter of 2026 and the project will proceed through the Public Works Department for bid and award of the construction contract. The park is expected to open to the public in the third quarter of 2027.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney’s Office, City Manager’s Budget Office, the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department, and the Transportation Department.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City Council Agenda website for the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting.

The Public Works Department and Park, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department, in coordination with City Council District 9 and the District 9 Leadership Group, completed a comprehensive public participation process. The first community meeting was held on-site on December 6, 2025, and the second community meeting was held via Zoom on January 29, 2026. Additional flyers were distributed in person to each neighboring resident following the December 6 community meeting. Email blasts were sent as follow-up for project awareness and for both surveys to ensure maximum participation. Community members were given the opportunity to review design concepts and provide input and feedback through these community meetings and surveys. Details of the community engagement are included in the Master Plan Report (Attachment A).

Staff coordinated with the City Council District 9 Office to notify constituents. The community was notified of the meetings and surveys via the following methods:

- Email notifications were sent, including the Willow Creek Neighborhood Association, City Council District 9 staff, targeted emails to property managers of multi-family buildings, four schools within a 10-minute walk of the park site, Project Hope staff, San José Parks Advocates, San José Parks Foundation, over 30 community organizations, five religious and fraternal institutions in the neighborhood, and various individuals. In total, nine email blasts resulted in over 720 notifications sent to the constituents listed above.
- Individual direct emails were sent to the Willow Creek Neighborhood Association, property managers of the multi-family buildings, and community-based organizations.

The first online public survey (December 6, 2025 to January 15, 2026) opened immediately following the December 6, 2025 community meeting. The survey was open longer than typical due to overlap with the holidays and to increase participation from the local community. Survey participants were provided a list of name suggestions and given the opportunity to suggest additional name suggestions. Staff received 151 responses to the survey (Attachment B – Online Public Survey Results). In addition to the name suggestions provided by staff, the first online survey resulted in four qualifying name suggestions that aligned with Policy 7-5 (Attachment C – Analysis of Name Suggestions). A new name suggestion form was received by email, resulting in the “Kell Park” name option (Attachment D - Name Suggestion Forms Received). All of the name suggestions were incorporated into the name options considered in the second survey.

The second online public survey (January 29, 2026 to February 8, 2026) opened immediately following the January 29, 2026 community meeting. Staff received 108 responses to the survey, which resulted in the following name preference order: 1) Bill Kee Park; 2) Wester Sweet Park; 3) Tulares Park; 4) Curtner Park; 5) Rinconada Park; and 6) Kell Park (Attachment B, page 49).

The survey and outreach materials were made available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese.

BOARD, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

The San José Parks and Recreation Commission considered the staff recommendation to adopt a park master plan and official park name. A member of Bill Kee’s family and three community members each spoke on behalf of the staff-recommended name, “Bill Kee Park”.

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Commissioner Morrow motioned to accept the staff report and refer a Master Plan for a future City Charter park that will be located within the Canoas Garden and Almaden neighborhood park to City Council for adoption and to recommend "Bill Kee Park" as the official park name for the Canoas Garden and Almaden neighborhood park site to the City Council, which was seconded by Commissioner Brennan. The motion was carried 10-0-1, with Commissioner Villarreal absent.

CEQA

Categorically Exempt, File No. ER25-137, CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures of the State. (Attachment E – CEQA Statement of Exemption, ER25-137, Development of New Passive Park).

PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

/s/
MATT LOESCH
Director of Public Works

/s/
JON CICIRELLI
Director of Parks, Recreation, and
Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Raymond Costantino, Deputy Director, Park, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department, at Raymond.Costantino@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 793-5561.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Master Plan Report

Attachment B – Online Public Survey Results

Attachment C – Analysis of Name Suggestions

Attachment D – Name Suggestion Forms Received

Attachment E – CEQA Statement of Exemption, ER25-137, Development of New Passive Park