

November 18, 2021  
Item 5

**TITLE: REVIEW LOCATION OPTIONS FOR A NEAR-TERM AND LONG-TERM  
CRICKET FIELD AT A PLEASANTON PARK**

**SUMMARY**

The 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommended that the City continue cooperative efforts with the youth sports organizations to provide safe and accessible programs. Cricket was specifically mentioned as one of those programs. At the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on January 14, 2021, the Commission identified the cricket field as their number three priority. A significant showing of Pleasanton residents supporting the construction of a cricket field attended the City Council meeting in which Council prioritized projects for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Workplan for fiscal years 2021/22 – 2024/25. Based on public input, City Council unanimously supported locating and constructing a cricket field in Pleasanton at their meeting on April 28, 2021.

After research, discussions with other cities that have constructed and operate cricket fields, and review of potential cricket field locations, staff recommends locating a cricket field in the existing turf area at Muirwood Park as a near-term solution and recommends locating a field at Staples Ranch as the long-term solution. The near-term solution would address the immediate needs of the cricket user groups while the long-term solution would be designed to meet the goals and objectives of the cricket user groups.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Review staff research, location options, and recommend locating a cricket field at Muirwood Park for the near-term solution and Staples Ranch for the long-term solution.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

There is no direct financial impact resulting from a Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation. Currently there is \$250,000 budgeted for this project in the Capital Improvement Program budget.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommended that the City continue cooperative efforts with the youth sports organizations to provide safe and accessible programs. Cricket was specifically mentioned as one of those programs.

In 2017, Ramesh Immadi with Cricket for Cubs approached the City to propose the construction of a cricket field at Ken Mercer Sports Park. City staff worked with Cricket for Cubs on the design and details and had plans ready to bid in early 2018, but the City and Cricket for Cubs were unable to come to an agreement regarding the costs and construction method for the project. Cricket for Cubs then entered into an agreement with the Pleasanton Unified School District to construct a cricket field at Pleasanton Middle School, but the field was seriously impacted by ground squirrels and the field never materialized as a viable location to play cricket.

City staff continued to discuss the possibility of a cricket field with Cricket for Cubs as well as other potential user groups. When the Parks and Recreation Commission prioritized park and recreation projects for the CIP workplan at their meeting on January 14, 2021, a significant showing of Pleasanton residents supporting the construction of a cricket field attended the meeting.

At the meeting, the Commission received a presentation on the City Council CIP Workplan prioritization process. Commissioners were advised of the thirteen categories into which City Council's priorities are organized. The Commissioners were also reminded of the ten not-yet completed projects from the previous CIP Workplan. The Commissioners were then asked to help identify, prioritize, and recommend projects for City Council consideration in the upcoming Workplan development. The Commission identified the cricket field as their number three priority and recommended the project to City Council for consideration for inclusion in the CIP Workplan.

Cricket field supporters also attended the April 28, 2021 City Council meeting in which Council prioritized projects for the CIP Workplan. At the meeting, the City Council unanimously supported locating and constructing a cricket field in Pleasanton. The City of Pleasanton's CIP Workplan then budgeted \$250,000 for the research, design, and construction of a cricket field.

Following the adoption of the CIP Workplan, the recreation, parks, and landscape architecture divisions conducted research and met with staff at the following cities to discuss their cricket fields:

- City of Fremont
- City of Dublin.

The meetings provided staff with insight on the needs of cricket players and the maintenance requirements for the fields. The City of Fremont currently has one synthetic turf cricket field and one natural grass cricket field with a synthetic turf pitch. The City of Dublin currently has one synthetic turf field and is in the middle of constructing a natural grass cricket field. In both Dublin and Fremont, the popularity of the sport and the need for field space has increased since each of the cities installed their first field. Both Cities keep their synthetic turf fields open nearly year-round while

the natural grass fields are closed for Winter (roughly December – March), similar to sports fields in Pleasanton. Of particular concern from a maintenance standpoint is the area of the field where the bowler runs up to the pitch to bowl the ball to the batter. These areas wear extensively and need particular attention. Also, the City of Fremont maintains the height of the natural grass at the same height as their other fields to ensure the health of the grass (approx. 3 inches in height). This is especially necessary in the areas leading up to the pitch that require more maintenance, and often replacement, of the grass area.

Additionally, staff held separate discussions with Commissioner Berberich and Commissioner Immadi, each of which represents a cricket user group, to determine the needs for the cricket field user groups. During conversations with Commissioner Berberich and Commissioner Immadi they stated their desire to not displace any other sports user group when adding a cricket field.

These meetings revealed the best approach to providing fields for the cricket user groups is to install a near-term solution and a long-term solution. The near-term solution would address the immediate needs of the cricket user groups while the long-term solution would allow for the opportunity to design the cricket facility to meet the goals and objectives of the cricket user groups.

The requested amenities and field size for both are as follows:

**Near-term:**

- Area large enough for a circular field with a minimum 180-foot radius
- Parking for at least 5 to 10 cars
- Matted pitch (synthetic) approximately 80-feet long by 12-feet wide in the center of the field; pitch can be DG, cement, or clay with synthetic turf on top
- Request that grass be cut to 1-and-1/4-inch height (the Parks Division currently mows all fields at 3 inches, and this would not likely change due to additional cost, wear and tear issues associated with a lower-cut grass and increased water use associated with a lower-cut grass)
- Space for storage (Knaack box, approx. 6 feet by 6 feet by 3 feet)
- Access to restrooms.

**Long-term:**

- Area large enough for a circular field with minimum of 240-foot radius
- Approx. 50 parking spaces
- Natural grass pitch/field
- Bermuda or similar grass that can withstand high wear/tear and can sustain all weather (any natural grass field will need to be closed for Winter no matter the type of grass)
- Field that can be used during weekdays/weekends year-round
- Lights
- Bleachers to seat approx. 100-200 people
- Field use by permit only
- Storage area for equipment
- Score board

- Low-cut (3/4-inch) grass (this may or may not be possible depending on turf options and associated maintenance requirements)
- Pitch area measuring approx. 80-feet long by 60-feet wide facing north/south
- Sight screens on both ends of the pitch
- Access to restrooms
- Water fountains
- Barbeque/picnic/team area with shade structure or indoor space.

Utilizing the above information, staff evaluated all the potential city parks where either the near-term solution or long-term solution cricket field could be located.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff reviewed the following parks within Pleasanton as potential cricket field locations, which are the only parks that could fit the requested field sizes:

- Ken Mercer Sports Park
- Amador Community Park
- Muirwood Community Park
- Staples Ranch (undeveloped location)
- Bernal Community Park.

Ken Mercer Sports Park and Amador Community Park were determined to have too many other potentially conflicting uses to meet the demand for the cricket field use, so no further evaluation was performed.

## **Near-term Solution**

### **Muirwood Community Park**

City staff analyzed Muirwood Community Park (Muirwood) and determined it to be the only viable location to construct a near-term cricket field. It is the only park that:

- Is without a significant amount of other sports user groups
- Has the necessary open grass area to install the 180-foot radius cricket field
- Has a public restroom
- Has space for storage
- Has a large amount of available on-street parking.

City staff presented the idea of locating a cricket field at Muirwood to the Sports Council on October 18, 2021. The Sports Council was generally receptive to the idea of the installation of a cricket field at Muirwood but wanted to retain the youth soccer fields at the site. Staff believes that cricket and youth soccer can share the field.

Staff recommends locating the near-term cricket field at Muirwood Community Park.

## **Long-term Solution**

### **Staples Ranch**

Staples Ranch, the 17-acre plot of land owned by the City, located off of Stoneridge Drive and adjacent to the Pacific Pearl shopping center, was analyzed to determine how well a cricket facility would work at the park. The future park location has:

- Easy access from Interstate 580
- Can accommodate requested parking
- Is large enough for the requested field size
- Can be designed to incorporate the associated amenities requested for the long-term cricket field.

Additionally, it does not have any conflicting uses as the park is yet to be constructed.

### **Bernal Community Park:**

City staff analyzed Bernal Community Park as a possible cricket field location because it had the potential to check all the boxes for a long-term solution.

However, upon close review of the Bernal Phase 2 Specific Plan, Bernal Community Park Master Plan, and the voter-approved measures for the Bernal property, it was determined that further legal analysis was necessary to determine if voter approval was mandatory.

Staff therefore recommends Staples Ranch as the long-term solution for the following reasons:

- Better vehicular access
- Less parking challenges
- Doesn't potentially require voter approval
- As an undeveloped site the location it can be designed to balance the needs of the cricket groups with reasonable maintenance requirements.

### **Next Steps:**

A notification for this Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was sent out to all residents within 500 feet of the park so that residents have a chance to review the proposal and/or discuss any concerns regarding the cricket field.

Staff is seeking policy direction from the Parks and Recreation Commission on the potential locations of the near-term and long-term cricket field solutions. Staff will then present the recommendation from the Commission to City Council for approval and create a Request for Qualifications for a consulting firm to assist with the following:

- Review the location to determine opportunities and constraints
- Provide conceptual designs that can be vetted with the community and various committees, commissions, groups and City Council
- Assist with public outreach
- Develop construction documents
- Develop an implementation plan and next steps.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION**

Any action determined by the commission.

Submitted by:

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

Matt Gruber  
Landscape Architect, Engineering Department

Attachment:

1. Overview of Muirwood Community Park Location
2. Overview of Staples Ranch Community Park Location
3. Overview of Bernal Community Park Location