

January 13, 2022
Item 4

**TITLE: REVIEW AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT KEN MERCER
SKATE PARK FINAL CONCEPTUAL DESIGN**

SUMMARY

The 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the need for an additional 1-acre skatepark. At the February 14, 2019, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the Commission identified a new skatepark as their number two priority for the City Council 2020-2022 Two-Year Work Plan Prioritization Process. The City Council adopted the skatepark as a priority for their 2020-2022 workplan as Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project No. 20774 with \$400,000 in funding for design services.

The City secured the design services of RRM Design Group in March 2021 and initiated the community outreach in May. The outreach included stakeholder meetings, a virtual community outreach meeting, and a community-wide survey.

Two conceptual designs were created based on the input received from the community outreach events. The concepts were presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission at two community events (the downtown BMX event and the farmer's market), the Youth Commission, a second community workshop on-site at the existing skatepark, the City Council, and a second online survey was created to garner input on the design options.

A Ken Mercer skatepark final conceptual plan was created that reflects the input received. City staff requests that the Parks and Recreation Commission review the final conceptual plan and public comments and recommend approval of the plan. The plan is scheduled to be presented to City Council for approval in February.

RECOMMENDATION

Review and make a recommendation to approve the draft Ken Mercer Skatepark final conceptual design.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

There is no direct financial impact resulting from a Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation. \$400,000 is budgeted for design work for this project in the Capital Improvement Program budget. \$115,154 of that amount was approved for the conceptual design phase. City Council will determine the final design and construction budget for the project.

BACKGROUND

The 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified skateparks as one of the City of Pleasanton's more significant deficiencies. The plan calculated that in 2013 (the date the research was conducted) the City was short on skate facilities by 1/2-acre and that an additional 1-acre skatepark would be necessary once the City reached 78,000; the projected build-out of the City at the time (the population of Pleasanton per the 2020 census was 79,871). To meet the demands of the community, the master plan recommended adding another skatepark at Ken Mercer Sports Park adjacent to the existing skatepark. The plan also recognized that skateboarding was the sport with the most growth in popularity.

At the February 14, 2019 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the Commission identified a new skatepark as their number two priority and the City Council adopted the skatepark as a priority for their 2020-2022 workplan with \$400,000 in funding for design services as Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project No. 20774.

Following the decision by City Council, the recreation, parks, and landscape architecture divisions proceeded to research and visit various skateparks throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. This research included meeting with the cities of Fremont, Milpitas, and Newark staff to discuss their skateparks and glean more information regarding their experience with the skateparks.

Utilizing the information collected from the site visits, conversations with local advocates, and research, staff compiled a checklist of site attributes necessary for a successful skatepark and identified City properties that met the criteria.

On November 10, 2020, staff presented the top location options (Ken Mercer Sports Park and Bernal Community Park) to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend that City Council explore an additional skatepark at Ken Mercer Sports Park.

On December 1, 2020, City Council directed staff to proceed with the design of a 1-acre skatepark with lighting at Ken Mercer Sports Park. Staff advertised a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), conducted interviews with firms, and City Council approved the contract with the top-ranked firm, RRM Design Group, on March 16, 2021.

Together with RRM Design Group, City staff proceeded with the public outreach component of the project, including:

1. Creating a website (www.pleasantonskatepark.com) that is regularly updated
2. Creating a social media Instagram account to increase engagement and feedback
3. Completing a topographic survey and a geotechnical engineer's report
4. Hiring an arborist to complete a tree assessment
5. Holding three stakeholder meetings (one with local skateboarders, one with sport group users, and one with Hopyard Village businesses)
6. Holding one virtual community outreach workshop
7. Conducting one community-wide survey
8. Holding several Zoom calls with local skateboarding advocates

Two conceptual designs were created based on the survey, geotechnical engineers report, tree assessment, and public feedback. The proposed skatepark designs consisted of:

Skatepark Draft Concept 1 Design Features:

- 86,000 square feet of skatepark with 34,000 square feet (0.78 acres) of new dedicated skateable area
- Picnic, hang out, view, and event areas
- Traditional shade structures
- Retention of the majority of the existing trees
- Drop-off and arrival area at the main (north) parking lot
- 20 additional parking stalls in northern parking lot.

Skatepark Draft Concept 2 Design Features:

- 90,000 square feet of skatepark with 38,000 square feet (0.87 acres) of new dedicated skateable area
- Picnic, hang out, view, and event areas
- Modern fabric shade structures
- Removal of the trees with low suitability of preservation (per the arborist's report)
- Additional drop-off area/access point in south parking lot
- 18 additional parking stalls in northern parking lot.

Both concepts contained beginner, intermediate, and advanced areas for skaters. Additionally, both concepts contained spaces for skate classes and workshops, landscaped buffers with shade trees at the exterior of the skatepark, and access from both parking lots. Lighting for the skatepark is planned with over-spill guards to significantly reduce lighting from bleeding into other areas.

The two concepts were presented at the following events/meetings:

1. August 12, 2021 – Parks and Recreation Commission
2. August 21, 2021 – Community Event #1 – the BMX event downtown
3. September 8, 2021 – Youth Commission
4. September 11, 2021 – Community Event #2 – the farmer's market
5. September 25, 2021 – Community Workshop #2 at the existing skatepark site

The City advertised for Community Workshop #2 to all neighbors within one-thousand feet of Ken Mercer Sports Park, posted the meeting on the City's website, on the project website (www.pleasantonskatepark.com), on NextDoor, Instagram, and Facebook, and posted flyers for the meeting on site and in city facilities.

The concept designs, along with the community input received at the various community outreach events, were presented to the City Council on October 5, 2021. Additionally, a second community-wide survey was advertised from September 25 – October 15, 2021.

The input received at the various meetings and events included:

Parks and Recreation Commission

Provided comments based on their review of the concepts and the input they received from the seven public speakers that attended the meeting. The speakers, which included local skate advocates and/or neighbors, supported the project, preferred concept 2, and advocated for lighting. The Commission's input was as follows:

- Prefer concept 2
- Prefer the northern parking lot as shown in concept 1
- Provide a walkway connecting the bus stop directly to the skatepark
- Provide focused lighting for the skatepark
- Provide a drinking fountain
- Requested further evaluation to determine if an additional restroom was necessary (the softball field restroom is within 1/8 of a mile and the restroom by the playground is within 1/4 of a mile)
- Provide shade and closely evaluate the retention of trees
- Recommend staff work with the Traffic Engineering Division to discuss the best flow of traffic for additional parking and drop off areas
- Work with the School District to advertise the project
- Include signage about the proposed project at the existing Ken Mercer and Val Vista skateparks.

Community Event #1 - the BMX Event and Community Event #2 – the Farmer's Market

Comments included:

- Provide lighting for the skatepark
- Provide shade
- Include a drop-off area
- Design the skatepark with safety in mind, such as keeping the beginner and advanced areas separate
- Design to accommodate classes, programs, and events such as a community skate competition
- The skatepark should allow for all wheels (skateboards, scooters, bikes, rollerblades, etc.)
- Provide a variety of design features such as half-pipes, hips, box jumps, spines, waves, rails, stair gaps, a mega-ramp, bowls, etc. Also, include a feature unique to this park such as a pyramid
- Most people were in favor of maximizing the size of the skatepark while still making sure the design fit the site, but one resident thought the skatepark should be at Bernal Community Park instead and wanted to keep all the existing turf that the proposed skatepark would replace.

Youth Commission

The Commission's input was as follows:

- The majority of the Commission felt that the proposed additional parking was necessary and that the City should provide as much parking as feasible without negatively impacting the healthy trees on site
- Consider adding a small restroom at the skatepark since the softball field restrooms are often closed and the next closest restroom (at the proposed all abilities playground) is more than 1/8 of a mile away from the skatepark

- Suggested potentially combining the two beginner areas into one larger area to help minimize potential beginner/advanced skater conflicts at the drop-in area
- Include lighting for the skatepark and pathways to improve safety in the park.

Community Workshop #2

More than two dozen people showed up at the workshop and the City received positive feedback from neighbors and skaters alike. Input included:

- Neighbors felt the proposed focused skatepark lighting was appropriate
- Overall support for expanding the skatepark
- Mixed reviews on keeping or replacing the existing skatepark
- Received dozens of specific comments regarding skatepark design features, including design bank to bank gaps, kidney bean, manual pads, etc.
- Provide bathroom access, especially for skate camps
- Provide shade
- Provide areas where people can hang out and skaters can leave their stuff
- Prefer concept 2
- Include something for everybody – beginners and experts alike.

City Council

- Overall support for the design and project
- Include at least 20 additional parking stalls if not more
- Include skatepark lighting, but work to limit impact to surrounding neighbors
- Provide drinking fountains
- Expressed concerns about the current lack of construction funds and asked about potentially phasing the project, particularly the bathroom
- Include shaded areas and retain trees as feasible
- Work with skaters on skatepark design-specific features
- Prefer concept 2.

Community-wide Survey #2

The second community survey had 214 respondents. Input included:

- More than 60% of the survey respondents would like to see more transition-based features rather than street-based features
- Slight preference for artistic elements in the skatepark over basic skate terrain
- Preferred amenities, in order of preference, were shade structures, drinking fountain, benches, hangout areas, picnic/bbq areas, and seat walls
- Concept 2 was preferred over concept 1 by 2:1
- Include lights
- Over 150 comments regarding skatepark design-specific features such as include a 10-ft bowl; provide a balance between mini bowls, transitions, mid-sized bowls, vert bowls, and street-oriented features; bigger handrails and ledges; etc.

In addition to the above community outreach meetings, the consultant worked in focus groups with local skate advocates to work through the skatepark design features. These meetings were primarily held on Zoom so that the designer could walk through the 3D

skatepark design with the skaters and they could draw directly on the screen or provide detailed comments regarding the design.

DISCUSSION

The proposed final concept design for the skatepark at Ken Mercer Sports Park sorted through the robust amount of public feedback along with the feedback received from the neighbors and the focus group of local skate advocates to incorporate as much of the feedback as feasible. Refer to Attachment 1 – Ken Mercer Skatepark Final Conceptual Plan for further information. Highlights of the plan include:

Ken Mercer Skatepark Final Conceptual Design

- Approximately 3-acres of improved area with a little over 1-acre in skateable area
- Picnic, bbq, hang out, and viewing areas
- Retention of the majority of the trees
- Traditional shade structures and areas shaded by trees
- 20 new parking stalls in the northern parking lot with a drop-off area
- Artistic entry features at both the northern and southern entrances
- Focused skatepark and pathway lighting
- Updates to the existing skatepark
- Area for skate camps
- Drinking fountains and water bottle fill stations
- Beginner, intermediate, and advanced areas for skaters
- Option for a restroom now or as part of a later phase.

The proposed skatepark is estimated to cost between \$7 million and \$8.5 million to construct with another half million required for the restroom, if approved. The range in costs accounts for design decisions that still need to be made and depends on when the project is built (inflation this last year approached 7%).

Staff is requesting that the Parks and Recreation Commission review and make a recommendation to approve the draft Ken Mercer Skatepark final conceptual plan. City Council will receive the Commissions recommendation, determine final approval of the concept plan, and determine the design and construction budget. The plan is scheduled to be presented to the City Council in February 2022.

Submitted by:



Michele Crose
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Attachment:

1. Ken Mercer Skatepark Final Conceptual Plan
2. Ken Mercer Skatepark Conceptual Plan Perspective Rendering