

September 8, 2022
Item 4

TITLE: REVIEW THE PUBLIC OUTREACH RESULTS FOR THE LIONS WAYSIDE AND DELUCCHI PARKS CONCEPTUAL PLAN AND PROVIDE COMMENTS TO STAFF REGARDING THE UPDATE TO THE LIONS WAYSIDE AND DELUCCHI PARKS MASTER PLAN

SUMMARY

In 2014, City Council adopted the Lions Wayside and Delucchi Parks Master Plan. However, the Master Plan design was not supported by the regulatory agencies (the Army Corp of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board) so staff has been working with the agencies to modify the plan to meet the regulatory requirements, while also meeting the goals and objectives of the community as identified in the Master Plan.

After several years and design iterations, further input from the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council, design modifications to include the two properties that the City purchased adjacent to Lions Wayside Park, the removal of the giant blue gum eucalyptus in Lions Wayside Park due to safety concerns, and coordination with the regulatory agencies, staff had a concept plan ready for review by the agencies.

The revised concept plan was presented to the agencies in December 2021. Staff received positive feedback from the agencies based on the revised design and presented the concept to the Parks and Recreation Commission on February 10, 2022, and to City Council on April 12, 2022. The Commission and City Council both approved of the concept plan. City Council then directed staff to conduct public outreach to seek community comments and concerns regarding the proposed concept plan because it was significantly different from prior versions.

A community survey intended to inform residents about the project was posted in May. Two outreach events and one public meeting were also held. The public input was presented to the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Committee (BPTC). The conceptual plan primarily received positive feedback and support, although several residents were either concerned with the project costs, or felt some design modifications were required, or were opposed to the project.

RECOMMENDATION

Review the survey results and community input received during the public outreach process for the Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks conceptual plan and provide comment to staff regarding the update of the master plan.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

There is no direct financial impact resulting from a Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project No. 06716 has been established for the project. City Council will determine the final design and construction budget for the project.

BACKGROUND

Design During Preparation of Master Plan

The 1993 Community Trails Master Plan proposed that a regional trail be located in the Alameda County Transportation Corridor (the no longer in service Southern Pacific Railroad Corridor that runs along Sunol Boulevard and First Street), including a Class A trail (defined as an 8-12-foot-wide multi-use path in the master plan) be installed through Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks.

In 2002, the Downtown Parks and Trails System Master Plan and Downtown Specific Plan recommended that Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks be considered in conjunction with the Main Street Green (now Rotary Park), Fire Station No. 1 (now the Firehouse Arts Center), the Main Street Bridge, the Regional Trail Corridor, and portions of the Arroyo del Valle to be designed to serve as one contiguous park area. The plans intended that the combined facility of Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks serve the immediate neighborhood, as well as the City, and that the areas also serve as a regional trail corridor.

In 2006, following the construction of the Firehouse Arts Center and the City's acquisition of the Alameda County Transportation Corridor property in the downtown area, the Lions Wayside and Delucchi Parks Master Plan (CIP No. 06716) process began. City Council approved a consultant agreement with the firm of Richard Larson & Associates to develop the master plan in December 2008. The firm's principal, Mr. Richard Larson, was the landscape architect for the Firehouse Arts Center project and was also the principal consultant for the Downtown Parks and Trails System Master Plan.

In 2009, public hearings with the Parks and Recreation Commission and Civic Arts Commission were held to review two schematic designs prepared by Mr. Larson. The major difference between the two schemes was the disposition of the drainage channel (known as Kottinger Creek) that runs through the site and whether it should be piped and "undergrounded" or be enhanced and embraced as a park feature. Both Commissions overwhelmingly supported undergrounding the drainage channel, but shortly afterward the project was placed on hold due to economic uncertainties. Then, in March 2011, the Parks and Recreation Commission prioritized Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks as one of the Commission's top three priorities for City Council's priority setting workshop for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011/12.

On May 30, 2013, updated Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks schematic plans were presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission with changes based on the feedback received in 2009. The meeting was held as a public workshop to garner open discussion with the community regarding the schematic plan options. The Commission again voted to recommend undergrounding the drainage channel. The Commission's support focused on the additional lawn space that would be provided for concerts and events, and the accessibility and safety issues they felt would be addressed with the undergrounding of the drainage channel.

On July 16, 2013, the schematic park designs were presented to City Council. Staff provided Council with a status report on the project, including the input that was received during the Parks and Recreation Master Plan process that identified the renovation of Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks as one of the most significant improvements that the City should pursue. Staff also identified the regulatory challenges that were possible in undergrounding the drainage channel. City Council directed staff to pursue the option that proposed undergrounding the channel and the city adopted the master plan on October 7, 2014.

Design After Adoption of Master Plan

The City contracted with AECOM to provide the necessary environmental and permit application consulting services. Undergrounding the channel required the City to secure permits from government agencies with jurisdiction over natural resources and review the project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). To satisfy permitting and CEQA requirements, the City, with consultant assistance, prepared a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) to accompany the permitting package for the project.

Upon receiving the IS/MND, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) all expressed concern regarding the proposed undergrounding of 533 linear feet of Kottinger Creek in Lions Wayside Park. The agencies were concerned with the potential loss of riparian habitat and impacts on surrounding watersheds. Due to these concerns, each of the agencies indicated they would not issue permits based on the submitted design and plans for Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks.

In November 2017, in response to permitting agency feedback, the City substantially revised the conceptual design to reduce impacts on Kottinger Creek and enhance segments of the channelized stream while still meeting the master plan's objectives of augmenting the appearance and use of the parks, upgrading an important downtown recreational amenity, and improving park safety. Compared to the previously submitted design, the new design significantly reduced impacts on Kottinger Creek but upon review by the RWQCB, this redesign was also determined to be unacceptable for meeting the objectives and standards of the agency, and therefore, the RWQCB did not support the redesign.

Taking into consideration the feedback and perspectives of the various permitting agencies regarding the section of Kottinger Creek in Lions Wayside Park, staff again initiated the process of modifying the originally adopted design of Lions Wayside Park to

achieve the intended goals outlined in the Master Plan, while conforming to the standards and guidelines that would be necessary to secure permits from the various local permitting agencies.

Design Alternatives

The City's consultants prepared four potential design alternatives that attempted to meet these goals. The design alternatives contained varying replacement locations for the existing Chan Henderson bandstand to maximize seating for event participants, as well as including the regional trail through the parks and other aesthetic and design improvements meant to increase efficiency and access to park features. Of the four alternative concepts, Council directed staff to further study three of the options and to present the designs to the Parks and Recreation Commission for review, to develop a final draft design that would meet the needs of the permitting agencies. The three options were:

- Option A: Embrace the Creek – move the bandstand to the northwest corner of Lions Wayside Park near the Firehouse Arts Center, with the creek in approximately the same location as it is currently
- Option B: Creek Access – move the bandstand to the northwest corner of Lions Wayside Park near the Firehouse Arts Center, with the creek relocated further to the south
- Option C: Larger Lawn – move the bandstand to the south end of Lions Wayside Park, with the creek in approximately the same location as it is currently.

All options included the regional trail.

On December 18, 2018, Council approved an agreement with Moore, Iacafano, and Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) to study the design alternatives and develop the concepts further. The principal in charge of landscape architecture for MIG, Richard Larson, is the same landscape architect that developed the Master Plan for the parks.

On January 10, 2019, staff presented the concept alternatives to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Commission recommended Option B and to maximize the lawn/concert viewing space. Following the meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission, staff and the consultants amended the schematic designs to align with feedback from the Commission and prepared for a subsequent meeting to solicit additional feedback from the necessary regulatory agencies on the refined designs.

At the same time that the City was refining the conceptual design for Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks, staff was also updating the Trails Master Plan. The Trails Master Plan incorporated the updated regional trail alignment as shown in the concept alternative recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission at their January 2019 meeting and City Council adopted the Trails Master Plan in May 2019.

Over the course of the next couple of years, City staff and their consultants worked with the RWQCB through several design iterations and provided further documentation to try to meet the requirements specified by the RWQCB.

In addition, during that same period, the City purchased properties at 4363 and 4377 First Street with the expectation to incorporate the properties into the Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks design. The City was also forced to remove the giant blue eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*) tree in Lions Wayside Park due to disease and safety concerns after a large, several-ton tree limb fell from the tree onto the heavily used grass area within the park. Thankfully, no one was injured. However, the purchase of the properties and removal of the tree provided an opportunity to provide a better trail design and to meander the creek further to the east to meet the RWQCB request for a more natural-looking creek.

On December 7, 2021, staff and MIG presented the current proposed design of the parks (see Attachment 1) to the regulatory agencies at an interagency meeting arranged by the Army Corp of Engineers. The regulatory agencies indicated that the design met their expectations and that the design would likely be approved if submitted as shown.

Staff presented the regulatory agency-supported updated Lions Wayside and Delucchi Parks conceptual plan to the Parks and Recreation Commission on February 10, 2022, for their review and recommendation. The Commission unanimously approved the draft conceptual design for Lions Wayside and Delucchi Parks with a recommendation that the bandstand be placed closer to Railroad Avenue similar to what was shown in the Parks and Recreation Commission's 2019 preferred concept plan (Option B) and that the design contains a safety component for pedestrians crossing Neal Street.

On April 12, 2022, City Council reviewed the updated conceptual plan, expressed their support of the design, including the orientation of the Chan Henderson Bicentennial Band Stand and regional trail as indicated on the plan, and directed staff to proceed with public outreach. The intention of the outreach was to seek community comment and concerns on the concept plan for the Lions Wayside and Delucchi Parks Master Plan Update since it was significantly different from what had been presented in the past.

DISCUSSION

The most recent public outreach process for updating the master plan included setting up booths at existing events to obtain feedback, a dedicated public outreach meeting held in Lions Wayside Park, a community survey, the creation of a website for the project (www.waysidedelucchi.com), social media outreach (NextDoor, Facebook, city newsletter, etc.), reaching out to the Pleasanton Unified School District, and telling kids attending the City's summer programs about the project and community survey. A summary of the events and the survey is included below. The complete comments are included as attachments to this report.

Public Outreach Event No. 1 (Attachment 2)

On May 14, 2022, staff set up a booth at the Pleasanton Farmer's Market from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. to obtain feedback from people attending the farmer's market, which is located

on W. Angela Street directly adjacent to Delucchi Park. Staff was able to talk with 40-50 people at this event:

- The majority of people liked/supported the design
- Most people supported adding more parking
- Residents wanted to retain as many existing trees as possible and add more trees to provide shade
- Residents supported closing Neal Street and/or Railroad Avenue for special events.

Public Outreach Event No. 2 (Attachment 3)

On June 17, 2022, staff set up a booth at the Concert in the Park from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. to obtain feedback from people attending the Summer Concert in the Park event that is held in Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks. Staff spoke with approximately 50 people at the event:

- Majority of people liked/supported the design
- Most people supported adding more parking, including more bike parking
- Most people wanted plenty of shade and to keep the existing trees
- Several people wanted to include a paved area for dancing in front of the bandstand
- Most people wanted to maximize the lawn area
- Some residents wanted to make sure there is a bike trail through the parks.

Public Outreach Meeting (Attachment 4)

On June 22, 2022, staff set up a booth in Lions Wayside Park at the Railroad Avenue and Neal Street intersection across from the Meadowlark Dairy from 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. This event was dedicated to the discussion of the proposed master plan update for Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks. In addition to social media advertising for the event, notification cards were sent out to all property owners and tenants within one thousand feet of Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks. Staff spoke with approximately 30-40 people at the meeting.

- A few residents recommended relocating the paths proposed in the main audience area so there is more turf/viewing area
- Some residents wanted to add more picnic tables and trash receptacles
- Several people wanted to install a restroom in Lions Wayside Park
- Several people wanted an area for dancing in front of the bandstand
- Many residents wanted to keep the trees

Community Survey (Attachment 5)

A community survey regarding the design of Lions Wayside and Delucchi parks was advertised from May 11 – July 11. 491 people completed the survey:

- Favorite thing about Lions Wayside and Delucchi Park?
 - Top two responses were trees and concerts in the park
- How do people currently use the parks?
 - Top two responses were eating ice cream and concerts in the park
- What park amenities are most important to include in the new design?

- Trees and bandstand
- Do you agree with the location of the bandstand as proposed
 - 80 percent said yes
- Preferred use of proposed parking lot?
 - 62 percent said to provide a balance between parking and recreation while 38 percent said maximize parking
- Is there anything missing from the park design?
 - Top two responses (besides shade and trees) were a children's play area and a restroom at Lions Wayside Park
- If the project is phased, which park would you like to see constructed as the first phase?
 - 81 percent said Lions Wayside
- Approximately 40 percent of people taking the survey live within walking distance of the parks and 95 percent of the people live in Pleasanton
- 42 percent of the people that took the survey were 56 or older while two-thirds of survey takers were 41 or older.

It should be noted that the community survey was intended as a method of informing people of the proposed conceptual plan much like the other public outreach efforts. While it did ask questions to gain a general understanding of how people view the proposed conceptual plan as well as how they currently use the park, it was not designed to be a statistically significant survey.

In general, the input received during the public outreach was positive and supportive of the conceptual plan with some requests for modifications or clarifications, such as modifying some pathway locations, including furnishings (bike parking, picnic tables, trash receptacles, etc.), providing a balance between parking and recreation for the properties that the City purchased on First Street, providing more shade, retaining as many trees as feasible, and providing more detail for the bandstand and areas around the bandstand. A minority of residents were opposed to the project and/or the cost of the project.

The BPTC reviewed the project and public comments on August 22, 2022. Two residents attended the meeting, and both expressed their support for leaving the layout of the parks as it currently exists and improving the parks without relocating the creek. The BPTC was supportive of the overall design and had the following input:

- Wanted more bike parking
- Stressed that they wanted to ensure the new trail sections would be Class I trails (10-ft wide minimum)
- Stated that the existing trail along the Firehouse Arts Center parking lot (8-foot of concrete pavement, a 4-foot vegetated buffer, and a 6-foot decomposed granite trail) was not used as designed and should not be replicated
- Suggested that the new parking lot travel lanes should be removed to prevent vehicle/biker conflicts. At the least, they would like one of the lanes to be removed. They felt that this would cut down on the loss of parking stalls in the existing parking lot while also improving safety

- Expressed their support for providing a balance of recreation and parking for the newly purchased properties on First Street.

The proposed conceptual plan and results of the public outreach efforts are now being presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission so the commission can express their comments and/or concerns about the conceptual plan. After receiving the commission's input, staff will combine it into a similar report that will be presented to the City Council seeking guidance on whether to proceed with the Lions Wayside and Delucchi Park Master Plan update based upon the proposed conceptual plan or to consider other options in the master plan.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Gruber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Matt Gruber
Landscape Architect, Engineering Department

Attachments:

1. 2022 Conceptual Design
2. Public Outreach Summary 2022-05-14 Farmers Market
3. Public Outreach Summary 2022-06-17 Concert Series
4. Public Outreach Summary 2022-06-22 Public Meeting
5. Survey Responses