

August 11, 2022
Item 5

**TITLE: RECOMMEND LOCATION FOR CRICKET FIELD PLACEMENT AT KEN
MERCER SPORTS PARK**

SUMMARY

The 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommended that the City continue cooperative efforts with youth sports organizations to provide safe and accessible programs. Cricket was specifically mentioned as one of those programs. City Council unanimously supported locating and constructing a cricket field in Pleasanton at their meeting on April 28, 2021, based on community input.

Initially staff researched location options within Pleasanton and determined Muirwood Community Park as a suitable location for a cricket field that could be constructed in the near-term and within a limited budget. This location option was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on November 18, 2021. The Commission voted 5-0 recommending that the City Council approve a cricket field at Muirwood Community Park. However, when staff conducted in depth outreach for the proposed project, the majority of the Muirwood neighborhood was opposed to locating cricket at the park.

On April 12, 2022, the City Council received a presentation on cricket, reviewed the recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission, and considered the additional community feedback. The meeting resulted in the City Council directing staff to identify a cricket field location at Ken Mercer Sports Park.

Staff identified three potential cricket field locations within Ken Mercer Sports Park and then engaged with the community and sports organizations that utilize Ken Mercer Sports Park. Staff recommends constructing a cricket field for youth and adults in location Option 1 at Ken Mercer Sports Park (Attachment 1).

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend location for cricket field placement at Ken Mercer Sports Park.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

There is no direct financial impact resulting from a Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation. Currently there is \$500,000 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 youth sports organizations to provide safe and accessible programs. Cricket was specifically mentioned as one of those programs.

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.

Cricket field supporters also attended the April 28, 2021 City Council meeting in which Council prioritized projects for the CIP Workplan. At that 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.

Staff conducted thorough research on location options within Pleasanton for a cricket field, met with staff at other cities to discuss their cricket operations and determined Muirwood Community Park could be a suitable location for a cricket field that could be constructed in the near-term and within a limited budget.

Staff presented information on the Muirwood Community Park location to the Parks and Recreation Commission on November 18, 2021. The Commission voted 5-0 to recommend a cricket field be located at Muirwood Community Park.

Staff then held additional outreach meetings with the community regarding Muirwood Park as a potential location for a cricket field. The majority of residents that attended the meetings or reached out to city staff were in opposition to locating cricket at Muirwood Community Park. Feedback from those meetings and a presentation were shared with the City Council on April 12, 2022. The City Council considered the additional feedback from the community at that meeting and directed staff to identify a location at Ken Mercer Sports Park that could accommodate a cricket field.

City Council allocated an additional \$250,000 for the cricket field project during the Fiscal Year 2022/23 Mid-Term Operating and Capital Improvement Program process on June 21, 2022.

DISCUSSION

Due to the size of youth and adult cricket fields and use of the park by other user groups, there are three locations within Ken Mercer that can accommodate a youth cricket field and one location that can accommodate both youth and adult play. (These location options can be seen in Attachment 1).

Staff conducted public outreach on the three location options which included the following:

- Staff met with representatives from the sports organizations currently using these locations to share the location options and capture their feedback
- Staff created signage articulating the locations and cricket field size. Multiple signs were placed in the park from June 17-July 11

- Cricket field perimeter and size of pitch were lined in the turf in blue lines for a visual of the potential cricket fields
- Staff created a survey which shared information about each location and asked for feedback
- The cricket field website (www.pleasantoncricket.com) was updated and information on the location options was placed in the site. The signs located in the park directed the public to the website for more information
- Staff shared information on the survey via social media
- Staff sent notice cards to owners and occupants within a 1,000-foot radius of Ken Mercer Sports Park notifying residents of the survey, the website and the August 11 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting
- Additional notice cards were sent to the same radius on August 1 for the August 11 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting.

The survey was available for public comment from June 17-July 11. During this period, 536 responses were received. Results are included as Attachment 2. Of the three locations, Option 1 was the preferred choice of survey respondents.

Staff spoke with Pleasanton Girls Softball League, Pleasanton Little League, Pleasanton RAGE Girls Soccer Club and Pleasanton Ballistic United Soccer Club and shared that each organization currently using a field located in Option 1 or 2 would be relocated to another field within Ken Mercer Sports Park or another park in Pleasanton. Staff indicated that no sports organization would lose any currently allocated space if a cricket field were to be installed in this location. In some cases, the new allocation would provide better access for these sports organizations.

Staff also met with Pleasanton Junior Football League and discussed a cricket field in Option 3. The football league's typical season is from June-October. The fields at Ken Mercer Sports Park are typically closed from November-February. Staff shared with the football league that if a cricket field were added to this location, football would continue to have their regular season allocation and cricket would be allocated space between March-May.

All the sports organizations were in favor of adding a cricket field to Ken Mercer Sports Park. The organizations differed in which option was their number one choice. All organizations felt that Option 3 was not a viable option. Option 2 received the most positive votes, with Option 1 closely behind. However, all organizations said they would like to see adults be able to play cricket as well and therefore felt Option 1 was acceptable.

Staff recommends Option 1, based upon community feedback and the ability to host both youth and adult cricket play. All options are outlined below for Parks and Recreation Commission consideration:

- Option 1:

Positives:

- This location could accommodate a youth cricket field with a radius of 180 feet and an adult field with a radius of 240 feet

- The cricket pitch could be constructed in between the two existing soccer fields without impacting play and would likely be constructed of cement or decomposed granite with an artificial turf overlay
- A youth cricket field in this location would not interfere with other sports that may be playing in adjacent areas
- An adult cricket field in this area may not require removal of Hard Ball (HB) B field fencing. At this time, staff do not recommend removal of the fencing and would like to conduct testing on the field first to determine if removal is necessary
- This location was preferred by survey respondents
- No trees would be removed to accommodate either cricket field in this location.

Potential Challenges:

- The area where the pitch would be located is currently a drainage area and would need to be raised to accommodate the pitch and drainage would need to be addressed
- The outermost perimeter is also close to the walking trail. Staff would like to test adult play to determine if safety netting or fencing is necessary
- The proposed east to west layout of the cricket pitch is not the preferred alignment for cricket by the youth cricket organization
- There is an approximately \$200,000 negative impact to City revenues by eliminating the adult softball program to accommodate the movement of other youth sports.

- Option 2:

- This location could accommodate a youth cricket field with a radius of 180 feet only
- The cricket pitch would be in the middle of this area and constructed of cement or decomposed granite with an artificial turf overlay
- Adding a cricket field in this area would require the removal of the underutilized Hard Ball (HB) B
- The area where the pitch would be located is currently a drainage area and would need to be raised to accommodate the pitch and drainage would need to be addressed
- The outermost perimeter is close to the walking trail. Staff would like to test play to determine if safety netting or fencing is necessary
- There is an approximately \$200,000 negative impact to City revenues by eliminating the adult softball program to accommodate the movement of other youth sports.

Note: Option 1 and Option 2 require significant movement of field allocations for existing youth sports. To accommodate the needs of these organizations, the adult softball program will be eliminated. This program serves approximately 30-40% Pleasanton residents and brings in approximately \$200,000 per year in revenue. Staff would look for other areas to increase revenues to offset this loss, but no specific plans have yet been determined.

- Option 3:
 - This location could accommodate a youth cricket field with a radius of 180 feet only
 - There is no impact to existing sports users
 - The cricket season would be limited to March - May
 - The pitch would be constructed of cement or decomposed granite with an artificial turf overlay
 - The actual pitch would be constructed in the middle of the two existing football fields so that football would not be disturbed
 - The outermost perimeter is close to the walking trail. Staff would like to conduct testing to determine if safety netting or fencing is necessary.

Staff is seeking the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation for a cricket field location in Ken Mercer Sports Park. Staff will then present the staff recommendation and the Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation to City Council for review and policy direction. Following City Council direction, staff will 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
- Develop construction documents
- Develop an implementation plan and next steps.

Submitted by:



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Attachment:

1. Cricket Location Options Overview
2. Survey Results