



City of Sebastopol

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 City Manager/City Attorney
 Larry McLaughlin
 City Clerk
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| Agenda Report Reviewed by: City Manager/City Attorney |
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Meeting Date: Meeting of October 17, 2017
To: Mayor and City Council
From: Kenyon Webster, Planning Director
 Dante Del Prete, Public Works Superintendent
Subject: Planning Commission Recommendations Regarding Ives Park
 Maintenance and Improvement Projects
Recommendation: Review Information, Provide any Comments, Consider in FY 18-19 Budget Process
Funding:

Currently Budgeted: ___ Yes ___ No ___ N/A x
 Net General Fund Cost:
 If Cost to Other Fund(s),

Introduction:

This report is a follow-up to the Park and Recreation Facilities Annual Report, recently reviewed by both the Commission and City Council. The Council was interested in further Planning Commission review/recommendations regarding various issues, including recommendations on potential shorter-term, affordable maintenance and improvements to Ives Park.

The Commission discussed this issue on September 26 and a list of projects is included in this staff report.

Master Plan:

In recognition that Ives Park was in need of major renovations, the City engaged in an extensive public process to develop a Master Plan, which was adopted in 2013. The Master Plan Report identified numerous issues at the park, with virtually every aspect needing renovation or redesign. See Ives Park Master Plan at:

http://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/sites/default/files/rmansour/ives_park_master_plan_final_full.pdf

Ideally, interim or shorter-term improvements would not create significant conflict with the Master Plan design.

Annual Parks Report:

The 2017 Annual Parks Report identified numerous maintenance and improvement needs at City parks and recreation facilities, including Ives Park. Following review of this report by both the Commission and Council, and pursuant to City Council direction, the Planning Commission conducted a 'walking tour' of Ives Park on August 8, 2017 with the Public Works Superintendent and the Planning Director to gather information on potential repairs and improvements.

Background:

Ives Park is a community park, located at 7400 Willow Street. It was built over 65 years ago and is the oldest park in Sebastopol. It contains a municipal swimming pool, baseball field, playground, theatre stage, grassy fields, and picnic areas as well as a portion of Calder Creek.

Ives Park has also been home to several festivals: the Cajun Festival, the Much Ado About Sebastopol Renaissance Faire, the annual Sebastopol Apple Blossom Festival that draws approximately 25,000 people, the Peacetown Summer Concert Series, and numerous other smaller special events. Due to the City's rather low facility rental fees, events generate limited income. The Commission recommended that these fees be updated; the City Council concurred with this recommendation, and the City's proposed annual fee update includes updated park use fees.

Ives Park has significant renovation and improvement needs. In recognition of this, the City Council adopted a renovation Master Plan in 2013. Virtually every aspect of the Park needs renovation or improvement, including pathways in poor condition, landscaping, irrigation, drainage, treatment of the creek, lighting, fencing, and site furnishings. There is an excessive amount of asphalt pathways, pathways are in poor condition, the creek is contained in an ugly concrete channel, landscaping is uncoordinated and in some areas lacking, lighting fixtures are unsightly and inefficient; the pedestrian bridges are worn; site furnishings are of inconsistent design; and there are a number of other issues.

The Park is very active, which adds liveliness to its spaces, in spite of physical deficiencies.

The Master Plan proposed a reorganization of some uses including the play equipment area and stage; 'naturalizing' the central area of the creek; placing the west part of the creek in a culvert to improve connectivity and increase usable area; 'capturing' the island to the west of the park and incorporating it into the park; major re-landscaping; and replacement of site furnishings and lighting.

Implementation of the Master Plan is estimated to cost in the range of \$5 million. Due to the interrelatedness of improvements, major improvements should be implemented in phases, or ideally, in a single phase. City resources are currently inadequate to initiate improvements of one or more major phases, which would likely be in the \$1 million to \$2 million range.

Planning staff applied for a \$1 million grant several years ago focused on the creek improvements; the grant was highly competitive, and did not score as well as other submittals for 'readiness' (the City did not have construction plans completed, in contrast to some other applicants). Some recent grant programs also prioritize low-income communities and more dense communities served by transit; Sebastopol does not score well in those regards. The City continues to monitor grant opportunities for this project.

The poor condition of many aspects of the Park, and the need for major funding creates a dilemma for the current situation: how much should the City invest in improvements that might be removed in 5-10 years?

While it is possible that major improvements may be initiated in the future, in the interim, it is desirable to implement needed smaller repairs and less costly improvements.

Purpose of Discussion:

The intent of this review is to identify priorities regarding short-term maintenance and improvement projects at Ives Park for consideration in the preparation of the proposed Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget, or for other funding. The budget preparation process typically begins in January of each year, with budget adoption usually in June of each year.

In its discussions, the Planning Commission has recommended that in the context of limited resources, maintenance should be the priority over new improvements, so the project list in this memorandum attempts to differentiate between the two categories. However there may be key improvements that should be priority projects.

Based on initial recommendations from the Council, City staff will perform more research on cost, feasibility, and workload implications and make recommendations in departmental budget proposals for review by the City's Budget Committee and later the City Council. Given the City's financial constraints, improvements will need to be limited.

Improvements in Progress:

- The adopted Capital Improvement Plan for this year includes replacement of deteriorated tot play equipment at Ives Park.
- The Capital Improvement Plan includes funding for tree replacements at both Ives and Libby Park. Several large trees fell during winter storms.
- The Public Works budget includes some funding for tree maintenance; Ives Park will likely be the bulk of tree work thus funded.
- Public Works has removed a large clump of invasive Pampas Grass next to the creek.
- ADA path of travel improvements to Ives Pool have been completed, and additional improvements at Ives Pool should be completed by this fall.
- The Council provided funding for three park identification signs as part of the first phase of the Wayfinding Sign project, including a sign for Ives Park.

Potential Maintenance and Improvement Projects:

Based on the Master Plan, Planning Commission discussion, and staff review, a number of potential improvements are listed below.

These potential improvements are presented for discussion. The listings generally reflect Planning Commission comments on priorities, with 'maintenance' projects generally being higher priority than new improvements.

However the Commission was in consensus that item #17, covering the deep and narrow creek channel on the west end of the park, as called for by the Ives Park Master Plan, should be a priority and would have significant positive effect on the park by connecting areas, increasing usable space without removing the Redwood trees adjoining the area, and eliminating a stretch of unsightly chain link fencing. This is likely the single most expensive item on the list. The Commissioners also felt that items #25, 26,

and 27, related to the creek, might be best deferred pending implementation of the Master Plan 'naturalization' of the middle part of the creek.

The Public Works Department may be able to address some of the maintenance items over time with existing resources, but some would require additional funding. Most projects are not suitable for volunteers.

Maintenance

1. Provide additional funding for placement of wood chips in landscaped areas, to assist in weed control and improve aesthetics.
2. Remove dead branches on trees, perform other appropriate pruning.
3. Address lawn drainage issue created by recent ADA pathway project.
4. Paint light poles black to improve aesthetics, and replace fixtures with more efficient LED lighting.
5. Lower hedge height to a maximum of approximately 4 ½ feet along Jewell and Willow to improve visibility into and out of the park.
6. Lower or remove most shrubs between Veteran's building parking lot and park to improve visibility into and out of the park. This may require removal of most existing large shrubs.
7. Address the issue of open (and regular) non-City-vehicle access into the park from Willow. Install bollards or institute other controls to address this issue.
8. Implement minor fencing repairs.
9. Repair steps to the wooden stage.
10. Replace all trash/recycling receptacles.
11. Place owl boxes to assist with gopher control.
12. Repave key pathways that are in worst condition.
13. Remove sections of asphalt pathways that are heaving due to tree root growth, where adequate pathways remain.
14. Remove the minimally-maintained 'rose garden' and replace with turf.
15. Lower hedge height in the 'maze' pathway area behind the wooden stage to reduce hidden areas.
16. Remove several temporary sculptures (one hanging on backside of Ives Pool building, the other in creek area) since their two-year placement term has concluded.

Improvements

17. Per the Master Plan, consider covering narrow creek drainage area at western end of park with culvert and creating new lawn or landscaped area, to improve park connectivity/usable area and eliminate unsightly deep fenced channel. The Planning Commission felt this would significantly improve the usability of the park, particular for events, and would eliminate the unsightly, deed concrete channel. However the cost of this project may exceed available funding.
18. Plant landscaping such as tall shrubs and vines to screen/soften pool fencing; or consider a mural painted on the slats.
19. Remove unneeded fencing/gate, and address grade issue at park entry at northwest corner of Veteran's property.

20. Remove sections of asphalt pathways in selected areas next to creek area fencing where feasible; remove other unneeded asphalt areas; place landscaping. Consider use of decomposed granite (DG) or other alternative material for pathways.
21. Provide new landscaping and irrigation as needed at selected bare areas. Specific areas include:
 - a. Adjacent to new path in front of pool equipment
 - b. Sloped area paralleling Willow Street, between pool and Veteran's parcel.
 - c. Area on north side of creek where several trees were recently removed.
22. Replace older concrete and wooden picnic tables with standard recycled plastic tables to match most existing tables in the park. The concrete tables could be transferred to the Laguna Preserve.
23. In collaboration with the Center for the Arts, create infrastructure (pads, landscaping, and irrigation) for sculpture garden along pathway from High Street. This project could possibly be funded by the Public Art In-Lieu Fee account.
24. Discuss issue of sponsor placards on Little League fencing with the League. The sponsor placards create a nearly-complete visual barrier between the Park and the Little League field. Spacing out the placards, or using a see-through type of placard would improve visibility. A Planning Commissioner volunteered to talk with Little League representatives about this issue.
25. Remove weir structure in creek to promote better flow/reduce damage in storm conditions and improve aesthetics. This will require regulatory permitting, and some Commissioners suggested be deferred to the Master Plan implementation stage.
26. Provide new native riparian grasses and shrubs in central fenced creek area.
27. Replace fencing around creek with new black chain link or other material. Some of this fencing has a poor appearance and since it is centrally-located, is prominent. On this item and #25 and #26, Commissioners noted that these improvements would need to be demolished with Master Plan implementation, so thought they should either be low-priority, or not performed.

Costs and Budgeting:

Based on Council direction regarding projects, and budget and feasibility considerations, staff will develop cost estimates for inclusion of potential improvements in the FY 2018-19 budget process, or if the Council felt appropriate, in the mid-year budget process.

In regards to funding, some projects may be suitable for accomplishment by volunteers or service groups, or for small grants. Funding may also be available from the Park Impact Fee fund or the General Fund. However, due to low residential development in the last decade and use of the Fund for various park projects, the Park Impact Fee fund balance has been declining.

One other funding possibility (several years in the future) is potential 'per-capita' State park funding, currently being discussed in Sacramento. This involves every jurisdiction in California being provided with a set amount of funding based on population. The State is also considering other park funding mechanisms which might boost future competitive grant programs.

Once a specific set of projects are identified, City staff can provide information to service and other groups regarding working on suitable projects under City supervision, or donating funding.