

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: 02/18/03 CONTROL NO: 03-000039

ITEM NO: VIII-2

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF FINAL DESIGN FOR FAIRVIEW PARK MASTER PLAN FOR AREAS A, C, AND D

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES

PRESENTATION BY: RON MOLENDYK, FAIRVIEW PARK PLAN ADMINISTRATOR

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RON MOLENDYK, FAIRVIEW PARK PLAN ADMINISTRATOR 714 - 754-5303

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Approve Parks and Recreation Commission action on final design for Planning Areas A, C, & D (Attachment A, A-1, A-2), as modified by the Commission as follows:

Delete any landscaping shown on the plan North of the Fairview Channel, and work with the Harbor Soaring Society to meet their needs while preserving the environmental integrity of the area.

2. Reroute the proposed trail around the vernal pool instead of through it.

3. Provide direction to staff on the Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation to reconsider and reinstate the "lower area" parking lot within the Fairview Park Master Plan.

BACKGROUND

At the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of January 22, 2003 the Commission was presented a report (Attachment B), and unanimously approved the final design of Planning Areas A, C, & D at Fairview Park (Attachment A), with the deletion of any landscaping northerly of the Fairview Channel. The Commission also directed that the issue of the silent flyer launch/landing site be further discussed with the Harbor Soaring Society to meet their needs but balance this with the environmental concerns associated with the plan.

The Commission also directed staff to obtain proposals for the design of Planning Areas E and F at Fairview Park. A second motion was approved by the Commission to recommend to City Council that they reconsider the construction of a lower parking lot. A letter in this regard has been sent from the Commission to the City Council (Attachment C). As a result of the action taken by the Commission, several local citizens expressed their concerns as it relates to certain elements of the approved final concept design of Planning Areas A, C and D, as shown on the Master Plan of Fairview Park. A map of Planning Areas A, C, and D is shown as Attachment D.

On Friday, January 31, 2003 Council member Cowan hosted a meeting with staff, the design consultant and sub-consultants, and a number of concerned citizens. As a result of this meeting, Council member Cowan has appealed the decision of the Parks and Recreation Commission to the City Council.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following items of concern were discussed at the January 31st meeting:

1. Compliance with the Master Plan:

A. Issue: The consultant's recommendations do not conform with the approved Fairview Park Master Plan (FPMP) (Attachment E).

B. Response by staff/consultants:

The Master Plan is a very important document, serving as a general guideline for the remaining phases of design. However, by its nature, the Master Plan is not the final design document but rather an intermediate step in the long process of design, leading to construction documents and construction.

The consultants' recommendations to date are based on the Master Plan document and provide additional detail, which is necessary in order to prepare construction documents. The design team and City staff believe that the refinements shown on the "Final Plan" are in substantial conformance with the approved Fairview Park Master Plan.

2. Alluvial Scrub Plant Community:

A. Issue: The name change from "Alluvial Scrub" to "Open Sandy Coastal Scrub" in Planning Areas A & C is a substantial change from the Fairview Park Master Plan.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

The plants found in the two plant communities are virtually the same with a few exceptions. "Open Sandy Coastal Scrub" is a more accurate description of the site conditions and accurately defines the plants identified in the Master Plan under the heading of "Alluvial Scrub."

3. Pacific Pocket Mouse:

A. Issues: Significant portions of the lowlands (referenced to as Alluvial Scrub) were intended for the reestablishment of the Pacific Pocket Mouse. The area now referred to as Open space Coastal Scrub is smaller than as shown on the Fairview Park Master Plan, and this will have an affect on the plans to transplant and reestablish the Pacific Pocket Mouse in this area.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

The environmental experts and regulatory agencies, including California Fish & Wildlife, no longer believe it is appropriate, or even feasible, to relocate this species into Fairview Park.

The Final Plan provides for a variety of implementation strategies in the lowlands, including enlarging the Open Sandy Coastal Scrub zone or enlarging the Riparian zone to allow for alternative funding methods such as selling mitigation credits for coastal sage scrub habitat or wetlands habitat.

4. Parking in Lowlands:

A. Issue: Parking is necessary in order to provide an adequate number of spaces in the park and to provide adequate access to the lowlands and Talbert Nature Preserve.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

The parking was removed at the direction of City Council on September 18, 2003.

5. Earth "Cap" on portions of Planning Area D:

A. Issue: The earth cap, which is proposed over the archeological/cultural site, is not necessary.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

The earth cap will serve several needs including:

Protection of the cultural site – many professionals in the archeological community believe that this is one of the most important cultural sites in Southern California and the site must be protected. Furthermore, the City consultant indicates that many of the improvements included in the Fairview Park Master Plan would trigger a Federal and State requirement to protect the archeological/cultural site in the manner proposed, or by fencing the site to prohibit any human contact.

The cap will redirect rainfall run off away from the bluffs. Large portions of the upper mesa currently drain in the direction of the bluffs, exacerbating the erosion problem. Redirecting the surface run-off will slow the erosion to acceptable levels, eliminating the need for other, more “engineered” solutions to the existing erosion problems – i.e., concrete culverts or swales, pipes, slope regrading, “benching”, slope guniting, etc. Several of these alternatives are more expensive than the recommended capping.

Re-directing the surface run off will help replenish the existing vernal pools.

Capping will allow for placement of soil types that will better support the proposed native grasslands.

6. Existing mounds in Planning Area D:

A. Issue: The existing earth mounds are home to diverse plant and animal populations, and should not be removed.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

The existing earth mounds are composed of a variety of soil types with integral roadway waste such as concrete and asphalt. The soil was imported and placed in the form of mounds to protect the cultural site. It was later determined that the soil was contaminated and the practice of importing this type of material was halted. This soil should be removed and properly disposed of.

Some of the plants that currently populate the mounds are invasive weeds. The final plan calls for removing non-native plant material and replacing it with native vegetation as described in the Fairview Park Master Plan.

New, gradually shaped mounds made up of clean material suitable for the growth of California Native Grass Land can be added to the final design. It is estimated to be more expensive to sift the existing soil and reuse it than to export and bring in suitable soil.

7. Accessibility:

A. Issue: Trails and bridges to the lower level as shown on the final design plans were not included in the Fairview Park Master Plan.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

Trails are necessary to provide accessible routes from the upper mesa to the lowlands in order to comply with Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines as well as to satisfy the requirements of the California Coastal Conservancy. Staff considers this a minor amendment to the Master Plan in accordance with City Council Policy 500-11 (Attachment F).

8. Bikeway Construction:

A. Issue: A bicycle link is necessary at the north east corner of the lowlands, near the junction of the Fairview Channel and Placentia Avenue.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

A bikeway is shown on the final plan which links the southbound Placentia Avenue bike trail with the Talbert Native Preserve through the lowlands area (Areas A and C).

9. Bus drop off in existing parking lot:

A. Issue: The proposed bus drop off is not part of the existing Fairview Park Master Plan. It should be redesigned so that it does not impact the adjoining picnic area.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

The bus drop off was proposed in order to increase the safety of school children who may visit the site by arriving/departing via a bus.

The bus drop off provides a means for the bus to safely turn around in the existing parking lot.

The bus drop off will also serve as an arrival path leading to the interpretive gathering area. If the bus drop off is moved to another location, it may require a new path or route that may force children to cross over existing parking lot areas, creating a safety issue.

Staff considers this a minor amendment to the Fairview Park Master Plan in accordance with City Council Policy 500-11.

10. Vernal Pool area:

A. Issue: The glider area / boardwalk is in conflict with the vernal pool.

B. Response by staff/consultants:

The glider area in relation to the vernal pool and the Harbor Soaring Society is being addressed by staff as part of direction received from the Parks and Recreation Commission on January 22, 2003. In reference to the proposed boardwalk, staff recommends relocating the trail around the vernal pool in order to finalize this issue.

11. Council Policy 500-11:

A. Issue: Staff did not comply with City Council Policy 500-11 (Attachment F).

B. Response by staff/consultant:

Staff has compared the proposed final plan for Planning Areas A, C, and D, and finds it in substantial conformance with the approved Fairview Park Master Plan, with the minor amendments as noted in this report. As mentioned previously in this report, the final design

plan is a refinement of the Master Plan, and makes adjustments, as recommended by the professional consultant, due to, but not limited to, the following factors:

- Regulatory agency requirements
- Preservation of resources
- Safety
- Existing site characteristics and elevations
- Prior experience on effective methods and techniques
- Economics/constructibility
- Maximization of existing facilities
- Maximization of user enjoyment
- Other site specific factors

Working drawings are presently underway for Planning Areas A, C, and D to meet the time frame deadline of the Coastal Conservancy Grant (March 31, 2003).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

One alternative is to provide additional workshops and/or hearings on the final design for Planning Areas A, C, and D. However, this alternative would not allow for the final design to be completed by the March 31, 2003 Coastal Conservancy grant deadline. Also, two workshops and two hearing were conducted last year to reconfirm the existing Fairview Park Master Plan.

FISCAL REVIEW

One alternative is to provide additional workshops and/or hearings on the final design for Planning Areas A, C, and D. However, this alternative would not allow for the final design to be completed by the March 31, 2003, Coastal Conservancy grant deadline. Also, two workshops and two hearing were conducted last year to reconfirm the existing Fairview Park Master Plan.

LEGAL REVIEW

There is no legal review required on this item.

CONCLUSION

The Parks and Recreation Commission have approved the final design of Planning Areas A, C, and D at Fairview Park, with several modifications. The Commission has also recommended that City Council reconsider their prior decision to delete the lower area parking lot.

A member of the City Council has appealed the decision of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

REVIEW AND APPROVALS

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR: William J. Morris, Public Services Director

COPIES DISTRIBUTED TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
Allan L. Roeder, City Manager
William J. Morris – Public Services Director
Steven Hayman – Administrative Services Director
Stacia Mancini – Recreation Manager
David J. Alkema – Parks Project Manager
Carol Proctor – City Manager's Office

ATTACHMENTS: "A", "A-1", "A-2" -Final Concept Design Maps

- "B" -January 22, 2003, Parks and Recreation Commission Staff Report
- "C" -Letter dated February 5, 2003 from Parks and Recreation Commission to City Council regarding the lowlands parking lot
- "D" -Fairview Park Planning Areas A, C, and D
- "E" -Approved Fairview Park Master Plan
- "F" -City Council Policy 500-11
- "G" -Preliminary Cost Estimate