



**DISCUSSION ITEM**

**Agenda Item # 13**

**AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY**

**Meeting Date:** November 10, 2020

**Subject:** Commission Recommendations Regarding Bocce Ball Donation and Grant Park Master Plan

**Prepared by:** Donna Legge, Recreation and Community Services Director

**Approved by:** Chris Jordan, City Manager

**Attachment(s):**

1. Park and Facility Improvements Identified for Grant Park

**Initiated by:**

Senior Commission

Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC)

**Previous Council Consideration:**

None

**Fiscal Impact:**

The following project will cost approximately \$75,000 and is included in FY 2020-21 operational park budget for professional consultant services, funded by the General Fund. Breakdown of funds to be used:

- o \$75,000 General
- Amount already included in approved budget: Yes
- Amount above budget requested: 0

**Environmental Review:**

Not applicable

**Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:**

- Does Council want to consider the recommendation from staff, Senior Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission to engage a landscape architect consultant to facilitate a comprehensive public outreach process, including the PARC Grant Park Master Plan Subcommittee and develop a Grant Park Master Plan?
- Does Council want to consider the recommendation from staff, Senior Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission to defer the acceptance of a donation of \$20,000 from the Rotary Endowment Fund and \$20,000 from the Los Altos Legacies for the construction of two bocce ball courts, until a Master Plan is completed and priorities are determined for Grant Park?

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**Reviewed By:**

City Manager

CJ

City Attorney

JH

Finance Director

SE

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- Does Council want to request the Los Altos Legacies and Rotary Endowment Fund to be flexible in the allocation of monies offered [to the City], based on the priorities of the Grant Park Master Plan?
- Does Council want to respectfully decline the donation offer from the Rotary Endowment Fund and Los Altos Legacies?

**Summary:**

- The Senior Commission recommends that Council support the pursuit of a Grant Park Master Plan to include bocce ball
- The PARC established a Grant Park Master Plan Subcommittee
- The PARC recommends that Council authorize [to produce] a Grant Park Master Plan
- The PARC recommends that Council request that the Legacies and Rotary are flexible in the allocation of monies offered based on the priorities of the Grant Park Master Plan

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that City Council acknowledge the most recent offer of \$20,000 from the Los Altos Legacies and \$20,000 from the Rotary Endowment Fund to build two bocce ball courts in Grant Park, including the deferral of a decision to accept or not accept the donation after Grant Park priorities have been identified through a comprehensive public outreach process.

It is recommended that City Council authorize staff to proceed with engaging a landscape architect to work with staff and the PARC Grant Park Master Plan Subcommittee to coordinate the public process and a site specific master plan for Grant Park.

**Purpose**

Consider recommendations from the Senior Commission and the PARC to engage a landscape architect to prepare a Grant Park Master Plan including a comprehensive public process.

**Background**

Prior to programs being vacated from the Hillview Community Center in March 2019, there was an average of 56 participants that utilized two bocce ball courts on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, on an informal, drop-in basis. After Hillview closed and prior to the COVID -19 shelter-in-place orders, an average of 20 bocce ball participants, each week, utilized available courts at Cuesta Park located in the city of Mountain View – 2.4 miles or a 5-minute drive from Grant Park.

The Los Altos Legacies representative King Lear spoke during the public comment portion of the Senior Commission meeting on October 7, 2019, proposing to fund the development of two



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permanent bocce ball courts at Grant Park with a \$20,000 contribution. In addition, King spoke during the public comment portions of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on October 16, 2019 and the City Council meeting on October 22, 2019.

During the public comment portion of the Senior Commission meeting on December 2, 2019, King announced that the Los Altos Rotary Club Endowment Fund (Rotary) matched the Legacies' donation of \$20,000, proposing a \$40,000 donation for new bocce ball courts at Grant Park.

Per the Donation Policy, any contribution made to the City of Los Altos valued to be greater than \$10,000, the acceptance (or not) of the contribution shall be placed upon the agenda of the City Council for its consideration. A letter to the donor(s) shall be sent following the Council's action, informing the person(s) of the Council's decision. Due to the nature of the offer, staff recommended that the Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as the Senior Commission, review the donation proposal and forward both recommendations to City Council.

At its regular meeting of December 11, 2019, the PARC recommended that the Senior Commission review the bocce ball proposal first and share their recommendation with the Parks and Recreation Commission at a future meeting.

On January 6, 2020, staff presented an analysis of the bocce ball proposal to the Senior Commission, including six optional locations for placement in Grant Park with an estimated cost of \$56,925. This includes public outreach, Commission and City Council meetings, design, construction, grading, drainage, and a contingency. The estimate was based on the cost of the two bocce ball courts being built at the new Los Altos Community Center. The estimate did not include costs associated with surveying, soil testing or shade structures.

The Senior Commission continued its discussion of bocce ball at its regular meetings on February 3 and March 2, 2020. Based on opposition and comments from the public, staff recommended that the Senior Commission consider a comprehensive public outreach process to determine the interest in bocce ball compared to other desirable amenities and priorities. Staff shared the park and facility improvements for Grant Park, that have already been identified by the City (Attachment 1). In consideration of the various improvements and the uncertainty that bocce ball was a preference, staff is recommended that the Senior Commission consider the pursuit of a site-specific master plan for Grant Park.



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### Definition of a Site Master Plan

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) produces research, education and policy initiatives including Park and Recreation Standards for operations and maintenance as well as accreditation and certification. According to the NRPA publication of “Management of Park and Recreation Agencies”

A site master plan refers to a drawing that is completed or contemplated, with all the physical modifications shown or proposed. A site master plan shows all the facilities, the vegetation (existing and proposed), circulation routes (roads, paths, trails), service and maintenance areas, parking, playgrounds, and all appropriate accommodations. A preliminary cost estimate will be prepared to see how the planned park documents work within an existing or proposed budget. Community input will help ensure that the plan is comprehensive and fair. This includes an ongoing strategy or process that encourages the residents to contribute suggestions and communicate ideas and concepts. The steps in a design process may vary by designer but generally includes research, inventory, synthesis, preliminary design, final design, implementation, and evaluation.

At its regular meeting of March 2, 2020, the Senior Commission recommended that the bocce ball courts be included in a greater [Grant Park] master plan process.

### **Discussion/Analysis**

A regular discussion by the PARC includes exploring park improvements and amenities that can be flexible, multi-use and serves the greater population in the least amount of space. Parkland is a valuable commodity given the limited acreage (45 acres) the City has available.

The Hillview Community Center included a City Senior Program and was combined with the Grant Park Senior Program (volunteer-based) when Hillview was closed in March 2019. The Grant Park Community Center is intended to be a shared attraction for the community, to include all ages, interests, and ability levels. The original Grant Park Senior Program that was initiated five years ago, will remain at Grant Park once the new Community Center opens.

At its regular meeting of July 8, 2020, the PARC appointed Commissioners Dailey, Morris and Yeh to serve on a Grant Park Master Plan Subcommittee to evaluate Grant Park and conduct a preliminary



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needs assessment, working with staff if/when a recommendation for a consultant is deemed appropriate.

At the regular PARC meeting of August 12, 2020, staff presented a revised offer from the Legacies committing to a \$30,000 donation for two bocce ball courts at Grant Park with a condition that the donation be accepted by City Council, prior to December 31, 2020. Should the City not accept the offer by that date, the conditional offer would expire. This was not the case with the \$20,000 donation offered by the Rotary Endowment Fund. After much deliberation, the PARC tabled the discussion to the next regular meeting.

At the September 9, 2020, meeting, staff shared the following update from King Lear:

The Los Altos Legacies board has decided to go back to our original letter offer of \$20K with no expiration date. Both charitable fund offers are now back to being the same for a total of \$40K [including \$20K from the Rotary Endowment Fund].

The bocce idea was excellent, timely, and generous a year ago and may be a good idea in the future. But now we have a continuing pandemic and other issues complicating life for the City. There is a reduction in city revenues, a large hit on our city recreation programs and fees, staff has to plan on moving into the new community center, and we are electing three council members. Bocce is a low priority compared with all this.

In a year or so when it is clear if and how senior programs will be staffed at Grant Park, then the City can check in with us, if you are interested in the bocce gift idea. It is possible that the gift amount could be increased above \$40K total, depending on the estimated project cost.

King further advised staff and the PARC to table the issue until sometime later, probably in 2021 when the recreation department finds a new normal or when a Grant Park Master Plan is completed.

Due to the late hour and reports that the Grant Park neighborhood experienced a power outage, the PARC recommended tabling the agenda item to the next meeting.

On October 14, 2020, the PARC made the following recommendations to City Council:

- 1) Authorize [staff] to produce a Grant Park Master Plan.
- 2) City Council request that Legacies and Rotary are flexible in the allocation of monies offered based on the priorities of the Grant Park Master Plan.



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## Options

- 1) Direct staff to draft a letter on behalf of the City Council to acknowledge the most recent offer of \$20,000 from the Los Altos Legacies and \$20,000 from the Rotary Endowment Fund to build two bocce ball courts in Grant Park, including the deferral of a decision to accept or not accept the donation after Grant Park priorities have been identified through a comprehensive public outreach process.

It is recommended that City Council authorize staff to proceed with engaging a landscape architect to work with staff and the PARC Grant Park Master Plan Subcommittee to coordinate the public process and a site specific master plan for Grant Park.

**Advantages:** Grant Park priorities are determined in a fair and inclusive public process. The City will obtain a professional and carefully planned park design for Grant Park including priorities, funding options, cost estimates, proposed phases and coordinated efforts with community input.

**Disadvantages:** The Grant Park Master Plan process will take time and careful planning in response to the pandemic.

- 2) Direct staff draft a letter on behalf of the City Council to acknowledge the most recent donation offer and request that the Los Altos Legacies and Rotary Endowment Fund be flexible in the allocation of monies offered, based on the priorities of the Grant Park Master Plan?

**Advantages:** Confirm commitment from donors to consider funding a park or facility improvement based on public input and priorities. Receive an alternative funding source for a future Grant Park project. Continue to foster positive relationships with local non-profits that support the City and community programs and services. Know in advance the commitment from the Legacies and Rotary Endowment Fund.

**Disadvantages:** The legacies and the rotary Endowment Fund may be offended by the request or may not be able to be flexible.

- 3) Direct staff to draft a letter on behalf of the City Council to respectfully decline the donation offer from the Legacies and Rotary Endowment Fund for two bocce ball courts in Grant Park?



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**Advantages:** Recognize significant opposition from concerned neighbors and residents.

**Disadvantages:** Legacies and Rotary Endowment Fund may be offended.

- 4) Do not authorize staff to proceed with engaging a landscape architect to work with staff and the PARC Grant Park Master Plan Subcommittee to coordinate the public process and a site-specific master plan for Grant Park.

**Advantages:** None

**Disadvantages:** Lack of a strategic plan based on public input.

**Recommendation**

The staff recommends Option 1.

**Park and Facility Improvements Identified for Grant Park**

2002 General Plan – Open Space, Conservation & Community Facilities Element

OCC 6: RECREATION PLAN

Develop and periodically update a Recreation Plan, which addresses existing and future facilities and services. In implementing and updating the plan, focus on retrofitting and improving the existing facilities and constructing new facilities in the most cost-effective manner. Improvements and new construction will implement requirements of the ADA.

- 6) Encourage use of community parks and facilities for cultural activities, special events and programs.
- 7) Adopt and maintain a capital improvement program for parkland acquisitions, improvements, existing park retrofits and recreational facilities, and a phasing schedule for commitment of resources including the design and construction of facilities.

OCC 8: RECREATION PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

Provide a full range of recreational opportunities to serve the community.

- 6) Continuing work with the Hillview Senior Center and Garden House [Grant Park Seniors] to identify the available programs and facilities for seniors, and looking for ways to augment them where appropriate.
- 8) Developing new recreation programs to reflect the changing needs and interests of Los Altos residents.

2012 Parks Plan

Grant Park recommendations:

- Look for opportunities to provide shaded seating through planting of trees
- Complete the Grant Park Renovation CIP which includes replacing lighting, benches, and the pathway
- Complete the Grant Park Jogging Trail CIP

\* The Parks Plan does not address recreation facilities, programs or events.

PARC Capital Improvement Program Recommendations

During the FY 2020-21 Budget & the Five-year (FY 2020-21 to FY 2023-24) Capital Improvement Program process, the PARC recommended the replacement of the Grant Park playground.

The playground equipment at Grant Park will be at the end of its 15-year expected life span. Pour in Place rubber should be considered as an addition to the playground to increase safety, increase inclusion for children with disabilities, and reduce maintenance costs.

The Grant Park playground renovation is scheduled for consideration in FY 2021-22. Park-in-lieu Funds in the amount of \$350,000 are allocated but require City Council approval.

City Council Capital Improvement Plan Priorities

At its regular meeting on September 24, 2019, staff facilitated the prioritization of the Capital Improvement Program with City Council. The following projects are listed as tabulated and approved by Council:

1. Police Department Renovation
2. Annual Pavement Improvement
3. **\*Grant Park Community Center**
4. Los Altos Youth Center
5. Parks Renovation
6. City Hall Renovation
7. Garden House Renovation
8. Public Pool Study
9. Halsey House

\*Staff has identified the following Grant Park Community Center and Park improvements that include, but are not limited to electrical upgrades, sustainable and efficient heating and cooling system, shade canopies, preschool room features, expansion of basketball courts, access to hot water (post COVID-19), storage, parking and consideration of a catering kitchen.

#### Parks and Recreation Commission Work Plan

At a special meeting on April 22, 2020, the PARC approved the FY 2020-21 Work Plan and shared it with City Council at their joint annual meeting on May 5, 2020. The following playground projects could be considered at Grant Park:

Goal: Aim for high quality parks and facilities:

Project: Inclusive Playground Features - Explore additional inclusive features (1 or 2) at each playground.

Project: Outdoor Adult Fitness - Determine placement for inclusive outdoor fitness components and equipment for adults.