

Recreation Commission: Public comments

King Lear, October 16, 2019

I am on the Legacy Board. We manage a fund dedicated to helping Los Altos senior programs. We have voted to contribute \$20K towards building bocce ball courts at Grant Park. Discussions are underway to apply for a matching gift from another charitable fund.

We propose that the City build two courts in south Los Altos to replicate the new ones planned for Hillview. Grant Park has a play area for children, a basketball court, and a soccer field, but no outdoor facilities for seniors. Bocce ball provides exercise, fun, and socialization. Even though we are old, we still like to go outside and play.

The bocce ball courts at Hillview have been a success for 17 years for seniors. Having the outdoor courts steps away from a Senior Center and rest rooms helped. This will be replicated at the new Community Center and, per our proposal, would at Grant Park.

With the addition of the proposed southern courts we can organize league play and possibly include other senior players and courts, like at the Forum. League play would bring seniors together from the entire city with new relationships and common interests.

There is a good location for two courts replacing some grass, as shown in the photo. This site is fairly level and not dedicated to any particular use.

The City can negotiate a contract to build two oyster shell courts identical to the ones in Cuesta Park¹, where our displaced players are playing, for under \$60K. Add to this site preparation, some benches, and sun protection. The offered \$20-40K would be a significant share of the total project cost. Perhaps the City's share could be funded from its Park-In-Lieu reserves.

I believe the City can complete courts at Grant Park in less than four months, if it so desires. This would serve our displaced Los Altos senior players, and the new venue and activity would attract other seniors who frequent the Grant Park senior center. When the Hillview courts are completed we can start league play.

Yesterday I met with seven leaders of senior bocce ball games in Los Altos. Representing ±70 regular players, they enthusiastically support this proposal.

Note 1: The Cuesta Park courts are 10 feet wide by 75 feet long. Cost is proportional to court playable area. Building courts side by side, simultaneously, provides some savings.

Dear Mayor Eng:

I think we can raise \$20K to \$40K from the community to help fund a bocce ball set up at Grant Park that replicates what is planned for the new Community Center at Hillview. There are no outdoor facilities for seniors at Grant Park now, but there is room for two courts with benches, etc. All other age groups have play structures, basketball and soccer. The area suggested is shown below looking east.



With equal bocce ball courts I can envision a N-S bocce ball league for seniors becoming very popular. Bocce ball brings seniors, men and women, outdoors to have fun and socialize. It is good for their physical and mental health. The N-S league would help bring both ends of town together with new relationships and common interests, at least for the senior participants. The league idea is why the Grant Park courts need to be identical to the Hillview courts.

I would like to meet you at Grant Park at your convenience to discuss this. I would also like to arrange for some of our Hillview bocce ball leaders and I to

address the Grant Park seniors at a lunch someday soon. We would talk about the advantages of the game for seniors, discuss the possibility of adding courts at Grant Park, and answer questions. I understand that you help plan the speakers. If we build the courts in the near future, the bocce ball players displaced from the Hillview courts can begin playing in Grant Park and include local seniors who want to learn about the game.

I do not know the cost of two nice courts with shade and benches, but maybe city staff knows. I imagine the cost is above \$40K. Since the design of the courts and shade screens and benches are to be identical to the new facility at Hillview, those design costs can come from the new Community Center fund. The site-specific costs, like for drainage, etc, would be part of the Grant Park project. The east/west orientation would also be the same. The city council would have to task staff to look into the idea and estimate the cost. I have already spoken with the Senior Commission and I plan to make a presentation to the Recreation Commission on October 16.

I am working on getting more info before I introduce this idea at a CC meeting during public comments, or have it agendized.

Best Regards, King Lear

10/11/19. Went to all council and city manager as well as the Mayor.

Mayor Eng answered and we have scheduled a meeting at Grant Park on Oct 23rd (Wednesday) at 10:30.