TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
ATTN: FINANCE COMMITTEE
FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES
DATE: MARCH 20, 2006 CMR: 151:06

SUBJECT: TRANSMITTAL OF PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNDEVELOPED SITE AT GREER PARK

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends the City Council refer the Park & Recreation Commission (PARC) recommendations to complete the undeveloped portion of Greer Park to the Finance Committee for review and direction.

BACKGROUND
Greer Park was originally master-planned by the City in 1974, with the first phase being constructed in 1980. In 1984, Council amended the Greer Park Master Plan (GPMP) and, among other improvements, recommended completing the plan by constructing five tennis courts and a parking lot on an undeveloped 1.4-acre parcel on the southeast edge of the park. This work has never been completed due to lack of funding and changing City priorities.

The undeveloped site became a priority again when the 2002 Field Advisory Committee Report to Council (CMR:462:02) outlined the disparity between the supply and demand for athletic fields for both youth and adult athletes in Palo Alto. One of the report’s recommendations was to investigate the option of adding synthetic turf and lighting to existing fields to extend playing time, including using the undeveloped Greer site as additional athletic fields. Council accepted the report and requested staff to begin analysis of alternatives and costs.

Using the Field Advisory Committee’s Report for guidance, staff approached the PARC with a proposal to develop the parcel into a soccer field. Reaction from the community for a limited space soccer field was negative, with the most vocal opposition coming from the youth sports community and the Midtown Residents Association (MRA). The primary concern was that a soccer field was not the best use of the parcel given its size and proximity to busy streets. The staff recommendation was not adopted by the PARC.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION
A PARC subcommittee was established in 2005 to investigate and return to the PARC with its recommendations. The subcommittee worked over a period of six months to determine best uses...
for the site. At its December 20, 2005 meeting, the PARC reviewed the recommendation of the subcommittee and unanimously recommended the following:

- The PARC recognizes the groundswell of community support for the completion of Greer Park.
- The PARC believes that the completion of Greer Park should be the City’s next most important recreation priority.
- The PARC recommends that the City Council accept this report, and recommends two options for consideration by the Council 1) development of the parcel into a passive park and 2) development of the parcel into additional tennis courts.

DISCUSSION

Given limited resources, staff believes that a combination of both a passive park and inclusion of two to three tennis courts would be an appropriate use of this parkland and would also satisfy the desires of the community and neighborhood.

Additionally, staff recommends exploring a third alternative if appropriate resources could be identified. Staff recommends utilizing a portion of this land for development of an updated skate park facility. The current skate facility is an out-dated facility due to its size, configuration and age. The existing skate facility is a three concrete bowl complex. Although this configuration is satisfactory for some skaters it is not suitable for beginners, in-line skates or skaters interested in more current skating techniques that require flat space, rails and steps. Should resources not be available, staff recommends designing the passive park and/or tennis courts, to allow for future expansion of the skateboard facility.

A plan that includes all three elements, a passive park, two or three tennis courts and a modern skating facility, could meet the needs of a broad array of community service users as well as an underserved segment of the youth and teen population.

RESOURCE IMPACT

Staff has determined through preliminary analysis that the cost for developing the parcel into a passive park is estimated to be $350,000 to $450,000. Adding tennis courts increases the estimate to about $800,000 if associated landscaping and parking is required to support the courts. Constructing a new skateboard park, tennis courts and a passive park area would cost approximately $1.3 million depending on ARB and Planning requirements and the size of the new skateboard facility. For all three alternatives, until further exploration is complete, staff does not know what additional parking will be required and what type of landscaping will be needed in order to mitigate excessive freeway sound levels.

This project does not have Infrastructure Management Project (CityWorks) funding. However, the project could be partially or fully funded through the use of development impact fees, if determined as an appropriate use of the funds. The existing balance in Park Impact Fees is approximately $813,000, of which approximately $100,000 is earmarked toward the Stanford/Palo Alto Community Playing Fields. Other projects that can potentially make use of Park Development Impact Fees include new park restrooms, artificial turf installations at Cubberley and Greer fields, and tennis court lighting at Cubberley.
It's important to note that operating and maintenance costs would be increased for any of the above options.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
A passive park and resized skateboard facility would require a change to the Greer Park Master Plan; additional tennis courts are currently in the Master Plan and would require no policy change. Additionally, a Park Improvement Ordinance would be required for any development.

PREPARED BY: __________

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DEPARTMENT HEAD: __________

Richard James  
Director of Community Services

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: __________

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**ATTACHMENTS**
Attachment A: PARC Greer Park Subcommittee Report  
Attachment B: PARC meeting minutes – December 2005

Cc:  
PARC  
Midtown Residents Association  
GOTSPACE