

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Public Works
DATE: 5/28/19
SUBJECT: Rinconada Park Improvement Project

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is requesting that the Parks and Recreation Commission provide a recommendation to City Council to adopt a Park Improvement Ordinance (PIO) for the Rinconada Park Improvement Project.

BACKGROUND

Capital improvement funding of \$1.7 million was approved by City Council to address current park improvement needs for fiscal year 2020. The improvements include infrastructure, accessibility and maintenance needs of the park. The proposed improvements were identified and supported by the community as part of the Rinconada Park Long Range Plan, which was adopted by City Council in the summer of 2017. The improvements of the existing two playgrounds and replacement of the existing asphalt walkways with concrete comprise the major budget items being addressed by the project scope. Park improvements are anticipated to begin in the fall of 2019 to coincide with the construction of the new Junior Museum and Zoo (JMZ), which is anticipated to open in the summer of 2020.

Improvement Items Proposed for Rinconada Park Include (Attachment A):

- Playground & Tot Lot Renovation
 - Relocate Tot Lot closer to main playground
 - All new playground equipment, fencing, rubber surfacing
- New Pathways
 - 12' wide main connection pathway
 - 8' wide connection pathways
- Site Furnishing Replacement
 - Picnic Tables, Benches, Water Fountain, BBQ's, Trash/Recycle Receptacles
- Picnic Areas
 - Renovate existing group picnic area
 - Create new picnic area at rear of JMZ at playground
- Expansion of main turf area
 - New irrigation
 - Install drainage
- Renovate planting areas
 - Reduce small turf areas

- Native/Habitat planting
- Pollinator garden
- Directional signage
- **Bid Alternate Scope**
 - Restroom

For more information regarding the current Rinconada Park Improvement project please visit the project web page at: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/rinconadaplan>

For more information regarding the Rinconada Park Long Range Plan and process please visit the project web page at: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pwd/rinconadaplan.asp>

DISCUSSION

As part of the community engagement for the Rinconada Park Improvement Project a series of meetings were held to review the proposed plan. The following meetings were held to review and provide input on the proposed park improvements:

- Community meeting - February 21, 2019
- Parks and Recreation Commission - February 26, 2019
- Teen Advisory Board - March 5
- Palo Alto Youth Council - March 19
- Community meeting - April 4

The following sections review the input received in those meetings and how the proposed improvement plan addresses that input.

Parks and Recreation Plan Input

Comments received from the Parks and Recreation Commission, and how the comments were resolved are provided below.

Comment: Relocate and disperse adult fitness equipment to outside of the defined playground area.

Response: Adult fitness equipment moved to outside of play area.

Comment: Review location of transit stop along Middlefield Road

Response: A transit stop currently exists along Middlefield Road near the school. Transportation will review the optimal location of transit stop along Middlefield with the new JMZ and parking lot as well as the new bike/pedestrian route at Kellogg.

Comment: Remove decomposed granite pathway from scope.

Response: Decomposed granite was removed from the plan for budget considerations.

Comment: Maintain restroom in the bid plan.

Response: A new restroom will remain a bid alternate in the plan. The restroom installation will be determined by the overall project bids.

Comment: Solicit further teen input.

Response: A meeting with the Palo Alto Teen Advisory Board and Youth Council were held to obtain input on the proposed plan.

Comment: Add a flashing light at Kellogg.

Response: Transportation is determining the feasibility of installing a flashing light at the Kellogg intersection of Middlefield.

Comment: Review future phases to guide scope.

Response: Future phases of Rinconada were reviewed by staff to determine project scope.

- Pathway improvements
- Playground is due for renovation (15+ years)
- Coincide with the JMZ and parking lot project
- Added picnic areas are needed in the park
- Current group picnic area in need of renovation
- Site furnishing needs replacement
- Follow the phase scope of work established by Long Range Plan

Comment: Scope of project to reflect family activities (playground and picnic), future phases focus on other park activities (fitness, art etc.)

Response: The project scope was established to meet current maintenance and access needs of the park, while addressing the aging playground equipment. The proposed project provides for family activities such as play and picnicking, as well as fitness opportunities of stand-alone equipment and walking loop path.

Community Meeting Plan Input

Two community meetings were held to review the proposed improvements. The following input was provided by the community, which is followed by how the input has been addressed in the plan.

Comment: Improve and expand the parking lot.

Response: As part of the Junior Museum and Zoo (JMZ) Project the parking lot will be reconfigured, but not expanded.

Comment: Improve entry into the park from the parking lot.

Comment: Maintain Hopkins parking lot connection.

Response: A driveway connection on Hopkins will be maintained in the parking lot.

Comment: Create a better link between Middlefield and the park.

Response: A new bike/pedestrian path will be constructed as part of the JMZ project from the Kellogg intersection into the park.

Comment: Provide more climbing structures in the playground.

Response: Additional climbing structures were added to the playground.

Comment: Move adult fitness to outside of playground.

Response: The adult fitness equipment was relocated outside of the playground.

Comment: Increase size of existing pathways.

Response: New pathways will range from 12' to 8' in the west end of the park.

Comment: Maintain and improve rear school access.

Response: Rear school access will be maintained and improved with the addition of a more direct path from Hopkins to the rear school gate.

Comment: Maintain school access during construction.

Response: Access to the school will be maintained during the construction phase of the project.

Comment: Limit the number of trees to be removed.

Response: One tree is proposed to be removed at the park entry to create a clear access path into the park. The non-native tree is also crowding out a native oak tree and its removal is recommended with limited loss of overall canopy and an improved growth environment for the native tree.

Youth Council and Teen Advisory Board Meeting Plan Input (Attachment B)

The proposed Rinconada Improvement Plan was presented to both youth groups with question and answer period, and a task asking what they would like to see in the plans for the park. The Youth Council was also asked to provide input about why inclusive playgrounds are needed in the community. These responses can be found in (Attachment C). Most of the park amenities identified by the responses were already included in the design including: Shady places to sit, drinking fountain, new park furnishings, fitness equipment, and expanded seating and picnic areas. Other items like volleyball courts, a climbing wall, basketball courts and food carts and trucks can be explored with future improvement phases.

With the expanded picnic area at the rear of the zoo it was suggested this space could be used for teen events and meetings and could include a partnership with the Junior Museum and Zoo to assist with programming.

Park Improvement Ordinance (Attachment C)

Staff is recommending the Parks and Recreation Commission recommend to City Council the adoption of a Park Improvement Ordinance for the Rinconada Park Improvements.

NEXT STEPS

- Bid Document Preparation & Project Bidding: Spring/Summer 2019
- Council to Adopt (PIO) and Approve Contract: Summer 2019
- Bidding of Project: Summer/Fall 2019
- Construction Begins: Fall 2019

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed design is consistent with the following Policies from the Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space and Recreation Master Plan:

Policy 1.E Apply universal design principles as the preferred guidance for design solutions in parks, striving to exceed Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

Policy/Program 3.A.9 Develop adult fitness areas in parks including exercise areas for exclusive use of older adults (seniors).

The proposed recommendations are consistent with Policy C-26 of the Community Services element of the Comprehensive Plan that encourages maintaining park facilities as safe and healthy community assets; and Policy C-22 that encourages new community facilities to have flexible functions to ensure adaptability to the changing needs of the community.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An initial CEQA Study was prepared as an aspect of the Rinconada Park Long Range Plan. None of the proposed new improvement require further study and are exempt from CEQA.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Proposed Park Improvement Plan
Attachment B: Youth Council and Board Input Cards
Attachment C: Park Improvement Ordinance (PIO)
Attachment D: Parks and Recreation Commission Presentation

PREPARED BY

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