



Staff Report

File #: 23-0531

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 06/21/2023
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Community Services Department

SUBJECT:
CITY PARK MASTER PLAN REVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to review and provide feedback on the City Park Master Plan. This master plan was developed with extensive community involvement and provides a vision for the future of City Park that honors its rich history, enhances the connection with the revitalization of Downtown, and provides amenities and programming that will bring the Corona community back to City Park for many years to come.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council review and provide feedback on the City Park Master Plan.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

City Park was established in 1913 and is the oldest and most centrally located park in the City of Corona. The park opened when the City hosted its first Grand Prix road race and has since evolved organically based on the desires of the community. Over the years, the park developed in a "piece meal" fashion and added various amenities including a swimming pool called the "Municipal Plunge," sports fields, playgrounds, and gathering areas for civic events. In the 1960's and 1970's, the area changed from mostly agriculture to commercial and residential uses, which has had a noticeable impact on the use and types of visitors to the park. In the 1980's a growing transient population and instances of local crime became evident in the area. Improvements made by the City to the park, such as the addition of a band shell, skate park, and basketball courts have been unsuccessful in encouraging the park's re-emergence as a gathering place for the community.

Several planning efforts have been undertaken prior to the development of this City Park Master Plan. In 2010, Baxter Miller Landscape Architecture (BMLA) developed the Corona City Park Reutilization Plan with the concept to "Bring Families Back to City Park." Due to the recession, no

funds were available to move forward with the park improvements and the project was shelved by the City. In 2011 the City of Corona Redevelopment Agency and KWC Engineers developed the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan (SP 98-01) which included recommendations for an expanded and enhanced City Park. In spring of 2022, the City Council approved the Downtown Revitalization Plan (DRP), a visioning and engagement plan that provides guidelines to help transform Corona's Downtown into a "Thriving, Vibrant Destination" for the surrounding community and region. City Park is the largest of four parks that were included in the Downtown Revitalization Plan boundary area, and particular attention was paid to the parks connection to the downtown area. Design Guidelines that were developed as part of the DRP process identify City Park as a Civic Space that should be better activated to "complement, expand, and retain businesses along major commercial arterials" as it serves as a primary gateway to the Downtown area.

The City of Corona 2021-2026 Strategic Plan includes a strategy under the goal of Sound Infrastructure for "Redeveloping City Park, including a new full-service, purpose-built community center." To implement this strategy, the Community Services Staff issued a Request to Proposal (RFP) for City Park Master Plan Consulting Services. The RFP was posted on the "PlanetBids" website and advertised in the Sentinel Weekly on March 30, 2022. RJM Design Group, Inc. was the only bid received. The proposal was evaluated by the Community Services team based upon the completeness of response, qualification of the firm, qualifications of personnel, work plan/project understanding and approach, and value of the proposal for reasonable costs. RJM team has experience in park renovation and recreational facility design. Based on RJM's experience in park planning and design, skillset, and knowledge necessary to execute this project successfully, the City awarded the project to RJM in June 2022.

ANALYSIS:

The process for preparing the City Park Master Plan was multi-faceted and included extensive community outreach to identify a vision for the future of City Park that honors its rich history, enhances the connection to the revitalization of Downtown, and provides amenities and programming that will bring Corona residents back to City Park for many years to come. RJM conducted a detailed site tour of the project site to review existing conditions, maintenance practices as well as building and facility conditions. Interviews were conducted at City popup events with several residents who have a vested interest in the park, these interviews provided valuable feedback from multiple perspectives with unique community desires. Innovative and purposeful marketing and outreach efforts were conducted with the Corona community through online surveys, door knocking, social media and heartfelt video posts, and pop-up events. The marketing efforts focused on inclusive visual marketing efforts that were in English and Spanish to reach a larger demographic. As a result of these combined community outreach methods, over 2,100 survey responses were collected representing a wide range of respondents throughout the City and the Council Districts. All data collected through this outreach was studied and incorporated into the City Park Master Plan. The takeaway from this outreach is that the community desires an experience within the park, not simply a stagnant collection of amenities.

The recommendations for City Park are discussed in detail in the attached presentation and City Park Master Plan document. These recommendations are founded in the desires and needs for recreation opportunities and experiences identified by the community, staff, and key stakeholders through the

plan development process. Staff recommends that the City Council review the City Park Master Plan and provide feedback and direction to return to City Council for final approval of the plan on July 19, 2023.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

The Parks and Recreation Commission received updates on the City Park Master Plan at their meetings on November 8, 2022, March 14, 2023, April 27, 2023, and May 9, 2023. At their most recent meeting on May 9, 2023, the Commission provided feedback to retain as many mature trees as possible at the project site during the construction process, provide sufficient parking for the variety of uses proposed with the project, prevent undesirable uses at the park once construction is complete, and provided questions on the need for the skate park.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with the City Council's review of the City Park Master Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action is to review and provide feedback on the City Park Master Plan and there is no possibility that this action will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required. Any future actions to approve the projects identified in the City Park Master Plan will go through the appropriate CEQA review process.

PREPARED BY: CAROLINE J. BUSTOS, PARK PLANNER & MOSES CORTEZ, PARKS, TRAILS, & FACILITIES MANAGER

REVIEWED BY: DONNA FINCH, INTERIM COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - Presentation
2. Exhibit 2 - City Park Master Plan
3. Exhibit 3 - City Park Master Plan - Appendix