

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL
RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION

DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2005

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: GREEN SPACE & RECREATION ELEMENT AND RECREATION & PARKS MASTER PLAN – INFORMATION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

This item is submitted as information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City began work on the Green Space & Recreation Element of the General Plan last year to serve as the guiding policy document for the preservation of existing green spaces as well as the future stewardship of both passive and active recreation areas. Along with the Element, a citywide Recreation & Park Master Plan has been under development. The Recreation & Park Master Plan provides a blueprint for the preservation, acquisition, and development of parkland and open spaces throughout the City.

The project includes extensive inventorying of the park and recreation facilities and programs available to Pasadena residents as well as detailed information on how these facilities and programs are used. Along with the inventories, an extensive public outreach component has been conducted to ascertain the community demand for park and recreation facilities and the priority placed on certain types of facilities and programs. The final stage of the project will be to take the identified community demand and compare against the City's inventory of existing facilities and programs to establish priorities and recommendations for recreation, parks, and open space.

BACKGROUND

The City began work on a Green Space Element last year to serve as the guiding policy document for the preservation of existing green spaces as well as the future stewardship of both passive and active recreation areas. The Green Space Element is one of seven mandatory Elements that comprise the General Plan. The other six

required Elements are Land Use, Mobility, Housing, Noise, Safety, and Conservation. In recognition of the importance of properly identifying recreational opportunities and the needs of Pasadena residents, the City has chosen to combine an optional Recreation Element with the required Green Space Element.

In September of 2004, the City Council authorized a contract with RJM Design Group to collaborate on the development of a Recreation & Parks Master Plan to be completed along with the Green Space & Recreation Element. The Recreation & Park Master Plan provides a blueprint for the preservation, acquisition, and development of parkland and open spaces throughout the City. In order to establish this blueprint, the Master Plan will include a detailed inventory of existing park and open space areas throughout Pasadena and will incorporate the results of an extensive community involvement process to ensure that the community's vision for recreation, parks, and open space is addressed. Essentially, the Master Plan acts as the implementation document for the policies and objectives within the Element.

Inventory and Community Outreach

The first phase of the project included an extensive inventory of the park and recreation facilities and programs available to Pasadena residents. The inventory provides a detailed evaluation of all of Pasadena's 23 dedicated City parks and the facilities they contain. Sports fields, sports courts, swimming pools, gymnasiums, community centers, and all other features are catalogued and recorded for each of the facilities. In addition, the City has collaborated with Pasadena Unified School District to inventory facilities present in public schools throughout the City and has obtained information on private school facilities when available. In addition to parks and facilities, a detailed inventory of recreation programs and services provided by the City has been obtained. This includes all of the city-sponsored programs and services provided at community centers and other locations. Again, information has been provided from private organizations and non-profits to determine potential gaps or overlaps in service provision. The resulting data from this effort is extremely important in gaining an understanding of the facilities and programs available throughout the City.

Along with the inventory work, the City has obtained information on how the facilities and programs are being used. Detailed information from the City's permitting software has been analyzed along with information obtained by users and service providers. Questionnaires were distributed to sports user groups, City service providers, and private and nonprofit community service providers to gain insights into frequency of use, number of users, whether users are Pasadena residents or non-residents, and potential conflicts between user groups. The usage data is then overlaid with the inventory data to determine an "on the ground" picture of how Pasadena recreation facilities, parks, and programs are being utilized.

As the inventory and use information was catalogued, an extensive public outreach process was developed to obtain the community's goals and desires with regard to green spaces and recreation. A Coordinating Committee for the project has been

established and includes members of the Planning Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, Transportation Advisory Committee, Community Development Commission, and PUSD. The Coordinating Committee has met approximately once a month through the life of the project and has provided guidance throughout the development of the scope of work and execution of the work program.

A community wide survey was administered to Pasadena residents in March of this year. A total of 450 interviews were completed with adult household heads living in the City of Pasadena. This statistically valid sample answered questions related to the following areas of interest:

- One feature respondents like best about living in Pasadena
- One change respondents would like to make in Pasadena
- Frequency of recreation facility usage
- Park most often used in last year
- Recreation program most often used
- Participation rates for 26 recreational activities
- One facility the respondent would like in Pasadena
- One program, class or activity respondent wants
- Demographic characteristics

The answers to the survey are incorporated into the methodology of the project to determine demand for certain types of facilities and programs. Answers to the areas of interest above and the rest of the survey data are available at the City's Green Space website for more information. In addition to the Citywide survey, there have been a number of other methods of community outreach employed through this project. Interviews were conducted with residents, visioning questionnaires were distributed to staff and commission members, questionnaires were distributed to sports user groups and community service providers, and a feedback loop was provided on the City's website. A series of four community workshops have also been held to provide residents with an opportunity to participate in the project from beginning to end. The first two workshops were dedicated to developing the vision for green space in the City and included identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats inherent in the project. The working vision developed out of these workshops is as follows:

To nurture a vibrant, viable, and healthy community through a high quality, coordinated system of parks, trails, open space, recreation and community services.

A third workshop was held for sports user groups throughout the City and the fourth community-wide workshop incorporated information from all of the outreach methods mentioned above and offered an opportunity for participants to prioritize the facility and program needs identified through each of these methods. The project has also been coordinated with the Cultural Nexus project and the community goals expressed through this process.

Facility and Program Demand Analysis

The heart of the Master Plan will be a detailed facility and program demand analysis, which is based on the numerous community outreach methods. A key element in a Park and Recreation Master Plan is an understanding of the nature of demand for parks and recreation facilities. Without this understanding, policy can only be based on general standards of supply and demand, such as population ratios (acres per 1000 population) or service area (distance to park facility). Such standards are useful guides and will be part of the Master Plan, but the demand analysis ensures that a needs assessment is created that reflects the character of Pasadena. The final stage of the project will be to take the identified community demand and compare against the City's inventory of existing facilities and programs to establish priorities and recommendations for recreation, parks, and open space.

Key Issues/Themes

As the project has progressed, key themes and issues have emerged from the community outreach and data analysis. The list of issues and/or themes below is not meant to be exhaustive but an indication of the important findings generated by this process and the policy decisions to be addressed. The list is in no particular order.

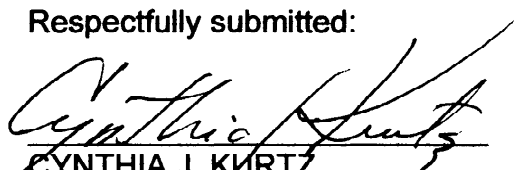
- GREEN SPACE QUANTITIES AND DISTRIBUTION – Are existing quantities of open space and parkland sufficient to meet community goals and needs for recreation facilities? The “gaps” in facilities and open space will be evaluated and addressed. “Opportunity sites” around the City will be identified for inclusion into the green space network (e.g. pocket parks, LA County Flood Control property, etc.)
- NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS – Recreation facilities within neighborhood parks will be planned to support the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- GREEN SPACE PRESERVATION AND ACQUISITION – Both current and 1994 General Plan public outreach efforts indicate that Pasadena residents favor open space preservation and acquisition of parkland as feasible. Identify opportunities to increase green space to meet specific needs and demands.
- CENTRAL DISTRICT/URBAN RECREATION FACILITIES – Much of Pasadena's new housing is being built in the downtown area. Quantity, distribution, and content of recreation facilities in urban areas are key issues that will be addressed by the Plan and Element.
- EFFECTS OF NON-RESIDENT USE OF FACILITIES – Non-residents of Pasadena have a significant impact on facilities and programs. The project will illustrate the impact of special events and non-resident users on these facilities and programs and make recommendations on how to address these impacts.

- **RECREATION PROGRAMMING THAT ADDRESSES CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS** – Recreation facilities and programming must address specific needs for specific populations in specific areas. Particular emphasis will be placed on youth and senior populations.
- **RECREATION PROGRAMMING COORDINATION** – Are there “gaps” in service provision or are certain services being duplicated?
- **JOINT USE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES** – A key finding of the project is that schools contain a great deal of green space within the City. Enhanced joint-use of school facilities is necessary to address community open space goals and improve facilities for students.
- **RENOVATION/MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING FACILITIES** – Many of Pasadena’s facilities get extensive and intense use. Are existing renovation projects and maintenance schedules going to keep pace with demand?

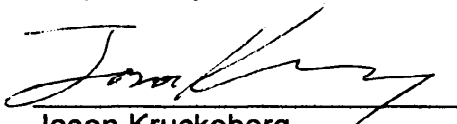
Next Steps

The next step with the development of this project is to complete and circulate the Draft Green Space & Recreation Element and Recreation & Parks Master Plan. Drafts of the two documents will be available for public review and will be scheduled for public hearings starting in November, 2005. An Initial Environmental Study will be prepared and presented along with the draft Green Space & Recreation Element and Recreation & Parks Master Plan. It is anticipated that, given the nature of this project, a Negative Declaration will be appropriate to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).


Respectfully submitted:


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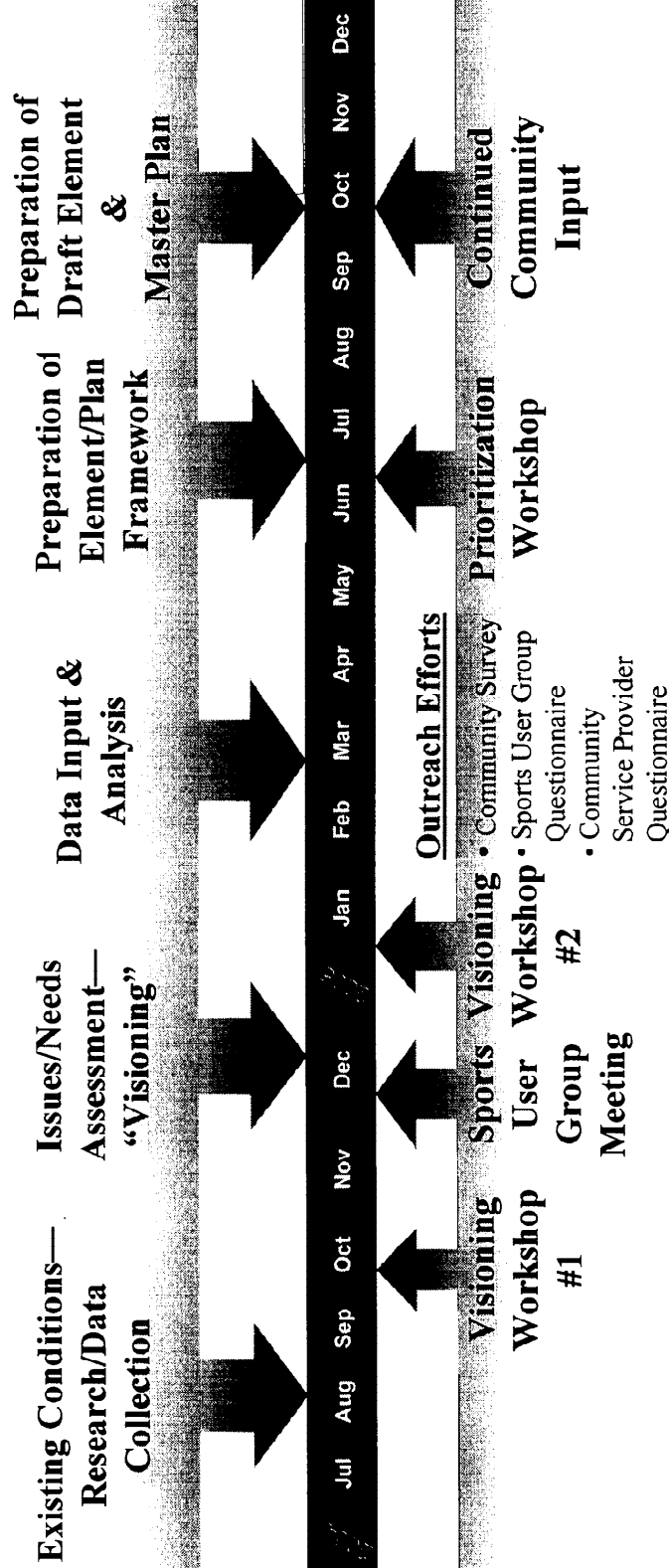
Reviewed by:


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Attachment A – Project Timeline

GREEN SPACE & RECREATION ELEMENT AND RECREATION & PARKS MASTER PLAN

Document Preparation



Community Participation

