

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: NOVEMBER 5, 2007

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: GREEN SPACE, RECREATION AND PARKS ELEMENT OF THE
GENERAL PLAN AND MASTER PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Adopt the Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration (Exhibit 1 of the Resolution); and
2. Adopt a Resolution approving the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element of the General Plan (Exhibit 2 of the Resolution) and the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan (Exhibit 3 of the Resolution).

RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On July 17, 2007, the Recreation and Parks Commission unanimously voted to recommend that the City Council approve the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element and Master Plan.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On September 26, 2007, following a public hearing, the Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend that the City Council:

1. Adopt the staff recommendation with the following changes to the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan
 - 5.1.1, Recommendations, Bullet Point #5 regarding Eaton Canyon to read as follows:
"Existing open space in ~~the easement area~~ these areas should be preserved to ~~the extent feasible and practical~~ to enhance the trail experience."

- 5.1.2, Recommendations, Bullet Point #1 regarding citywide Open Space zoning to read as follows:
 “These areas ~~should~~ will retain their Open Space zoning ~~to the maximum extent feasible and should~~ will be used for recreation-related or open space uses.”
- 2. Concurrent with consideration and adoption of the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan, City Council shall appoint a citizen-based task force to work with staff on the Open Space and Conservation Element of the General Plan.
 - The Open Space and Conservation Element shall include a detailed land acquisition plan (funding and implementation).
- 3. Within 90 days of City Council’s adoption of the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan, City staff shall report the following information to the Planning Commission regarding the Residential Impact Fee:
 - Fees collected to date
 - Potential for fees to be used for land acquisition
 - Identification of publicly-available, for sale properties in the Central District

Staff concurs with the Planning Commission’s recommendations 2 and 3. On recommendation 1, staff concurs with the Planning Commission’s recommended changes to 5.1.1 regarding Eaton Canyon but recommends the original language be retained on recommendation 5.1.2 regarding Citywide open space. Per the City Attorney’s office, the recommended language by the Planning Commission for 5.1.2 would fix the use at a site not owned by the City, and in that regard could result in legal claims by private users who do not currently maintain recreation-related or open space uses on their property. Further, the language recommended by the Planning Commission for 5.1.2 is more restrictive than the zoning code land use regulations for Open Space (OS) zoning. A large part of the OS zoned property in the City is owned by other regional agencies/ utilities whose primary use may not be compatible with recreational uses and over which the City does not have jurisdiction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element and Master Plan are the result of a three year effort to determine the community’s goals and objectives for natural open space, parks, and recreation facilities and programs. The two documents work together to identify the existing facilities and programs, assess how they are used, identify where additional park facilities or recreation programs are needed and recommend how to best meet these needs.

The key recommendations of the documents are to:

- Increase connectivity between local trails and regional trails
- Acquire additional parks and open spaces, particularly in the identified “gap areas”

- Increase cooperation and joint use of school facilities with the Pasadena Unified School District
- Address deficits in sports fields and recreational facilities through improving existing facilities, acquiring additional facilities, and pursuing joint use of school facilities

BACKGROUND

The City began work on a Green Space Element in 2004 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. In September of 2004, the City Council authorized the development of a Recreation & Parks Master Plan to be completed along with the Green Space Element. The Master Plan provides a blueprint for the preservation, acquisition, and development of parkland and open spaces throughout the City and acts as the implementation document for the policies and objectives within the Element. As such, this Master Plan does not fall under the master plan provisions in the Zoning Code intended for specific development proposals.

On October 25, 2006, the Planning Commission reviewed the draft Green Space Element and Recreation and Parks Master Plan. There was extensive public comment and Commission discussion about the need to further protect natural open space, particularly in Eaton Canyon and the Linda Vista hillsides. The Planning Commission recommended that the documents be sent back to staff and the Recreation and Parks Commission for additional discussion on natural open space.

The Recreation and Parks Commission re-opened its discussion on the Element and Master Plan and appointed a subcommittee to expand the inclusion of natural open space issues in the Element. The subcommittee met several times in early 2007 with open space advocates from the community and developed a recommendation for the full Commission. On July 17, 2007, the Recreation and Parks Commission voted to recommend that the City Council approve the revised Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element and Master Plan.

On September 26, 2007, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended that the City Council approve the Element and Master Plan with the changes outlined in the recommendation above.

As part of the FY2008 Operating Budget, funds were approved that include preparation of an Open Space and Conservation Element of the General Plan. Therefore, the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element and Master Plan will serve as an optional Element of the City's General Plan and the upcoming Open Space and Conservation Element will be the state-mandated "Open Space Element" and "Conservation Element." There will be some overlap between the future Open Space and Conservation Element and the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element. California General Plan law requires that there be consistency between all General Plan Elements. When the Open Space and Conservation Element is completed, staff will

review the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element for consistency with the new Element and propose revisions to the Green Space Element, if necessary.

Community Outreach and Inventory

An extensive public outreach process was developed to identify community goals and desires with regard to green spaces and recreation. A Coordinating Committee for the project was established that included members of the Planning Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, Transportation Advisory Commission, Community Development Committee, and Pasadena Unified School District. The Coordinating Committee met approximately once a month throughout the life of the project and provided guidance for the development of the scope of work and execution of the work program.

A community wide survey was administered to Pasadena residents in March 2005. 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 types and frequency of park facilities and recreation programs that they used.

The answers to the survey were used to determine demand for certain types of facilities and programs. 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 were held to provide residents with an opportunity to participate in the project from beginning to end.

Along with the community outreach process the project included an extensive inventory of the park and recreation facilities and programs available to Pasadena residents. The inventory provided 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 were catalogued and recorded for each of the facilities. In addition, an inventory of outdoor recreation facilities at Pasadena Unified School District campuses was conducted. Information about private school facilities was also included when available.

In addition to parks and facilities, a detailed inventory of recreation programs and services provided by the City was obtained. This includes all of the city-sponsored programs and services provided at community centers and other locations. Again, information from private organizations and non-profits was used to determine potential gaps or overlaps in service provision. The resulting data provided an understanding of the facilities and programs available throughout the City.

Along with the inventory work, the data collection included information about 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 was then overlaid with the inventory data to determine an “on the ground” picture of how Pasadena recreation facilities, parks, and programs are being used.

This extensive data collection and identification of community’s goals and desires led to the creation of the Vision Statement that guides the documents:

To create, maintain, protect, and restore an interrelated system of parks, trails, and natural open spaces. To provide recreational opportunities which sustain a vibrant and healthy community with an emphasis on ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

Summary of Element and Master Plan

The documents are organized under five key issues (see Attachment 1):

- Natural Open Space
- Developed Parkland
- Recreation Facility Uses and Distribution
- Recreation Program Types and Distribution
- Organizational Structure and Ongoing Community Participation

The Natural Open Space issue area includes policies, objectives and implementation measures to promote stewardship of the natural environment; protection and preservation of the Arroyo Seco, Eaton Canyon, and adjacent areas; acquisition of natural open space areas; and expanding and connecting our trail system with other trails in the region.

Under the Developed Parkland issue, the goals are to preserve and acquire additional parkland, including urban open spaces and pocket parks; and improve public transportation to provide easier access to parks. A list of standard and optional amenities for parks based on park type ensures that parks meet the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Recreation Facility Uses and Distribution issue contains policies to ensure that all neighborhoods have parks within walking distance. Attention is given to areas where the population density is the greatest – in Northwest Pasadena and in the Central District – and strategies are established to acquire additional park facilities in these areas through land acquisition, joint use of school facilities, and creative means such as using freeway air space, rooftop gardens, or urban plazas. The plan includes recommendations to provide additional tennis courts, soccer fields, adult softball fields and indoor basketball courts which are required to meet the current demand.

Under the Recreation Program Types and Distribution issue, the goal is to provide recreational programming that is responsive to community needs and that promotes a healthy lifestyle. During the community outreach process, environmental education was identified as a priority program need, and the Master Plan includes several recommendations to meet this need, including developing an Education Center at Hahamongna Watershed Park and partnering with local colleges and high schools.

The fifth key issue is Organizational Structure and Ongoing Community Participation. The goals are to continue to facilitate community dialogue to ensure that parks and recreation programs meet community needs and to continually evaluate city organizational structure to provide efficient and effective management of open space and park facilities and programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

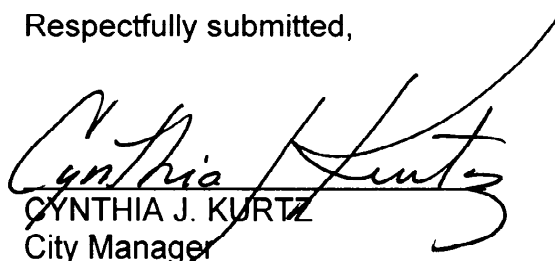
Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA – Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), an Initial Environmental Study and draft Negative Declaration for the Green Space Element and Recreation and Parks Master Plan was prepared and circulated for public review. The Initial Study concludes that adoption of the Element and Master Plan will not result in significant impacts on the physical environment. No adverse impact on fish and/or wildlife is anticipated (see Exhibit 1 of the Resolution).

A draft Negative Declaration has been prepared (see Exhibit 1 of the Resolution). No written comments were received on the environmental documentation as of the preparation of the report.


FISCAL IMPACT:

Approval of the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element of the General Plan and Master Plan will establish policies to guide future park and recreation decisions in the City. These policies impact not only what the City will look like, but also influence the quality of life of the City. The exact fiscal impact of these policies cannot be measured; however they are intended to create an environment that supports the community's vision of a healthy community.

Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

Reviewed by:



Richard J. Bruckner, Director
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Patsy Lane, Director
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Martin Pastucha
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Prepared by:



Laura Fitch Dahl
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Enclosures:

Resolution approving the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element of the General Plan and the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan

Exhibit 1 to the Resolution – Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration

Exhibit 2 to the Resolution – Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element

Exhibit 3 to the Resolution – Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Core Principles

* Note that these documents and the Appendix are available in color on the Green Space Element website at: <http://www.cityofpasadena.net> – Click on “Green Space Element.” The appendix includes very detailed summaries of the community workshops, the phone and user group surveys, and the recreation demand analysis.

ATTACHMENT 1

Core Principles of the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element and Master Plan

NATURAL OPEN SPACE

- Pasadena will be a City that actively protects its natural open spaces and critical habitats.
- Pasadena's natural environment shall be thoughtfully preserved as an ongoing investment in the health, safety, and beauty of the City for the benefit of both present and future generations.

DEVELOPED PARKLAND

- All Pasadena neighborhoods shall have access to park, open spaces and recreation facilities that serve their unique needs.
- All Pasadena residents shall live within reasonable walking distance from a park, open space, or recreation facility.
- Pasadena will be a City that actively creates new green spaces by promoting creative partnerships with local and regional agencies, as well as private institutions in order to provide access to and development of both traditional and non-traditional parks, cultural and recreational opportunities, and open spaces.

RECREATION FACILITY USE AND DISTRIBUTION

- The City's parks and open spaces shall maintain a balance between active and passive uses (including casual, informal, or individual leisure activities), both citywide and within individual parks, to meet the recreation demands of residents.
- Pasadena residents, PUSD students, and people that work in Pasadena shall have priority in the use and programming of parks and open spaces.

RECREATION PROGRAM TYPES AND DISTRIBUTION

- Recreation programming shall be responsive to community needs and will promote a healthy and active lifestyle for residents.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & AND ONGOING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- Planning for Pasadena's open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities will be an ongoing and inclusive community process.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA
APPROVING THE GREEN SPACE, RECREATION AND PARKS ELEMENT OF THE
GENERAL PLAN, AND THE GREEN SPACE, RECREATION AND PARKS MASTER
PLAN**

WHEREAS, the General Plan required pursuant to Government Code §§ 65000 et seq. is the City’s basic planning document, and serves as the “constitution for all future development” within the City; and

WHEREAS, Government Code § 65302 requires that a General Plan contain the following seven mandatory elements to govern a city’s physical development: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element (“Element”) is an optional element of the City’s General Plan, and is not meant to serve as the required conservation element or open space element; and

WHEREAS, the Element, and the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan (“Master Plan”) are guided by the following Vision Statement:

To create, maintain, protect, and restore an interrelated system of parks, trails, and natural open spaces. To provide recreational opportunities which sustain a vibrant and healthy community with an emphasis on ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education; and

WHEREAS, the Element and the Master Plan have been prepared based on comments from City staff, public testimony, the Planning Commission, and the Recreation and Parks Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Element and the Master Plan have been subject to review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; a Negative Declaration has been prepared and circulated according to law; and the Planning Commission recommended to the City Council that it adopt the Negative Declaration, the Element, and the Master Plan on September 26, 2007, and

WHEREAS, the Negative Declaration, the Element, and the Master Plan were the subject of a public hearing before the City Council on November 5, 2007.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Pasadena hereby adopts the Initial Environmental Study and Negative Declaration attached hereto as Exhibit 1; adopts the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element attached hereto as Exhibit 2; and adopts the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan attached hereto as Exhibit 3. All exhibits are incorporated herein by reference.

Adopted at the regular meeting of the City Council on the 5th day of November, 2007, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

JANE L. RODRIGUEZ, CMC
CITY CLERK

Approved as to form:



THERESA E. FUENTES
ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY