

# Agenda Report

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL DECEMBER 10, 2001  
**FROM:** CITY MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF THE ROBINSON PARK MASTER PLAN

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

- 1) Approve in concept the Robinson Park Master Plan (Attachment A) pending completion of the environmental review of the project; and
- 2) Amend the Capital Improvement Program to include the Robinson Park – Implement Master Plan Project (budget account #78034); and
- 3) Approve a journal voucher appropriating \$30,000 from the General Fund unappropriated fund balance to the Robinson Park – Implement Master Plan Project for completion of the environmental requirements.

**RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On October 2, 2001 the Recreation and Park Commission recommended that the City Council support the recommended Robinson Park Master Plan.

**REVIEW BY COMMISSIONS:**

The project was presented for input by various groups because of the varied community uses of the park and its recreational center. The master plan was presented to the Recreation and Parks Commission, the Fair Oaks Project Area Committee, the Design Commission, the Northwest Commission, the Access and Disability Commission, the Planning Commission, the Human Services Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Senior Commission and the Arts Commission during August, September and October of 2001 for review and comment. As part of the comments, the Fair Oaks Project Area Committee, the Northwest Commission and the Human Services Commission voted to support the master plan. None of the comments received at any of the Commission and Committee presentations necessitated any modification to the proposed plan.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

City staff and the Robinson Park Master Plan Steering Committee have developed a master plan for Robinson Park. Community input gathered during a series of master plan workshops has strongly supported significant modifications to the existing park. The proposed modifications include the construction of new buildings, parking and the expansion of the park to the south utilizing the former Highland Plastics property. Final approval by the City Council will be sought in approximately six months after an environmental review of the master plan has been completed.

**BACKGROUND:**

The revised Robinson Park Master Plan (See Attachment A) encompasses the entire 7 acre park site plus a 2.5 acre parcel located directly south of the park (currently occupied by an industrial building owned by the City, the parcel is bounded by Fair Oaks Avenue to the west, existing industrial uses to the south, Morton Street to the east, and Robinson Park to the north) for a total area of approximately 10.5 acres. This park is one of the most heavily used facilities in the City of Pasadena, serving approximately 400 users a day. Recreation programs at Robinson Park include youth and open basketball, weight room activities, exercise programs, martial arts programs, piano classes, computer classes, after school clubs, drill teams, the Northwest Pasadena Pony League and the West Pasadena Little League. The existing recreation center is a former mortuary building that was adapted for reuse. The size, layout and functionality of the interior spaces are inadequate, some of the rooms are undersized, and it no longer meets the needs of the community.

The new master plan focuses on active recreational use, but does include areas for passive use as well. The centerpiece of the new plan is a new recreation center and pool complex. The proposed facility will completely replace the existing facilities, including the parking, playground and outdoor basketball courts. The only existing facilities to remain would be the sports fields and the wooded picnic area south of the roller rink.

The total square footage of the facilities will increase from 18,910 square feet to 38,275 square feet. The new facilities significantly expand upon existing uses such as music, exercise, classrooms and the gymnasium. New types of facilities that will be provided in the proposed center include a clubroom, youth center and computer lab. These facilities will significantly expand recreational and developmental opportunities for residents.

The new facility is based on the concept of integrating the various activities in the park, both indoor and outdoor. The indoor basketball and the outdoor basketball areas are adjacent and linked by large windows. The swimming pool will be in the center of the park, in a highly visible, central location. Poor visibility into and out of the existing park contributes to the perception that the park is not safe. The new design emphasizes good sightlines into and through the park, facilitating supervision by park staff. Increasing security in the park was an important consideration in the development of the master plan.

The new location proposed for the gym and the pool creates opportunities to use the site much more efficiently. Relocating the gym and the pool allows enough space for a parking lot on the north (Hammond Street) side of the park. This location has much better visibility than the existing lot on Morton Avenue. The existing parking was a major security concern for residents and park users due to illegal activities that were fostered by the lot's relatively secluded location.

The process of revising the Robinson Park Master Plan began in January 2000 with the formation of the Robinson Park Master Plan Steering Committee. The steering committee is composed of representatives of various City Commissions and community members, supported by city staff from various departments such as Public Works, Human Services, Neighborhoods and Recreation and the Police Department

Community workshops were held on Thursday, April 27, 2000, January 31, 2001 and May 31, 2001. The need for a new recreation center at the park was the main issue at each of the workshops. Park security was also one of the major concerns voiced at the workshops. The City hired an architectural consultant to prepare a detailed master plan that would include a new recreation center in October 2000.

After the second workshop, staff and the project's Steering Committee decided that it would be worthwhile to consider development of an alternative plan that would expand the park's boundaries to encompass the City's newly purchased parcel of land south of the park, the former site of Highland Plastics. This decision was made after the Pasadena Unified School District's Northwest School Site Selection Committee recommended several sites for a new elementary school. The Highland Plastics site was not one of their top choices. However, the School Board has yet to act on the recommendations made by the selection committee and District staff have informed City staff that the Highland Plastics property is still under consideration. After extensive discussions, the Robinson Park Steering Committee recommended that all the existing structures on the Highland Plastics site be demolished and the land used to expand the playing fields and for additional parking.

The existing pool and changing rooms are old and in need of significant renovation. The existing gym is in fairly good condition, but is too small for the needs of the community. To meet these needs, the gym should be enlarged. Well-designed new facilities will be less costly to maintain than keeping older facilities on line. Given those considerations, the plan proposes replacement of these facilities.

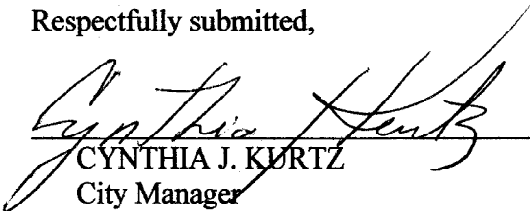
**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:**

An environmental review of the master plan will be completed in approximately six months. When the review is complete, the appropriate environmental documentation will be prepared and will accompany the plan when it comes before the City Council for adoption.

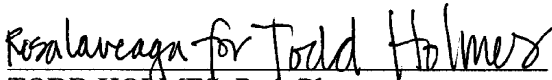
**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The architectural consultant and staff have prepared a cost evaluation of the master plan. Based on this evaluation, all the improvements shown on the plan can be constructed for 15.5 million dollars. A detailed breakdown of the estimated cost is attached to this report (Attachment B). This cost does not include an allowance for furniture, fixtures and equipment. Sufficient funds for the environmental review are available in the General Fund unappropriated fund balance.

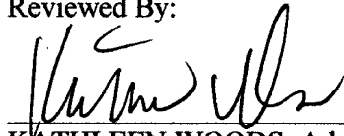
Respectfully submitted,

  
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