



Parks and Recreation Commission Staff Report

April 5, 2007

SUBJECT: Review of Conceptual site Planning Diagrams for the Proposed Staples Ranch Community Park

BACKGROUND

The Commission conducted its first workshop regarding the Staples Ranch Community Park on March 1, 2007. City staff and project consultants presented background information regarding the planning process and existing site conditions. During the public comment period, representatives from Logitech Ice (San Jose Sharks) presented a proposal to develop a four-rink ice skating facility through a joint partnership with the City on eight (8) acres of the proposed 17-acre park site. Requests from a variety of local community groups for additional amenities at the park were also presented, including lighted sports fields and tennis courts, a dog exercise area, restroom facility, passive recreation areas, trails, and open space.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the Commission scheduled a second workshop for April 5, 2007, and asked staff to prepare one or more conceptual site plan diagrams that included the following uses:

- Two (2) all-weather lighted sports fields to accommodate a mix of soccer, football, lacrosse and possibly baseball
- Four to six lighted tennis courts
- Dog exercise area
- Open space suitable for bird watching or other passive recreation
- Restroom
- Trail system and trail head connecting to outlying areas

Since the March 1 workshop, the consulting landscape architect for the project (Keller Mitchell & Company) has worked with staff to prepare two (2) alternative park diagrams. The upcoming workshop will allow the Commission an opportunity to review these alternatives, accept public comment, and provide suggestions for a preferred park concept plan. Staff will then draft the preferred plan and add background text for the Commission to potentially approve at its regular meeting on April 12, 2005, for subsequent review by the City Council.

RESPONSE TO MARCH 1, 2007 COMMISSION COMMENTS

At the March 1, 2007 workshop, Commission members requested that staff research the following matters and include responses in the April 5 staff report:

- Identify the location and condition of existing trees on-site.
- Describe the proposed shared vehicular access connections to Auto Mall Place.
- Provide a status regarding the large stockpile of dirt on the proposed park site.
- Provide background information regarding the all-weather sports fields in Danville, and discuss the merits of potentially including baseball as a shared use with other field sports.

Responses to each of these items are presented below:

Trees – There are currently no trees growing within the proposed park site. An existing grove of trees is situated immediately to the north, on the proposed retail site.

Shared Vehicle Access – The City and Alameda County have been discussing access to a reoriented City park and the adjacent 12-acre site. While a final roadway alignment has yet to be developed, current plans call for a single roadway from “Auto Mall Place” serving both parcels. The roadway would generally be aligned with the entry to the Hendrick Automotive Group development to the north. While Logitech Ice has indicated an interest in a separate access for its development, the single access road would better serve the Staples Ranch development and adequately service a reoriented City park with or without the ice facility. It should be noted that in the event the Commission does not endorse the proposed reorientation of the park, vehicular access would be limited to Stoneridge Drive.

On-Site Stockpile - Stuart Cook, representing the current owner (Alameda County) of the Staples Ranch property, was contacted regarding the status of the stockpile of dirt that is situated on the site. He provided the following response:

“The stockpile, which originated from the excavation of the new Arroyo Mocho channel in 2003, is required by both the Community Living Center (CLC) and Hendrick Automotive Group as fill to raise their respective sites several feet for proper drainage (both storm water and sewer). This was done per the business terms between the County Surplus Property Authority and both developers. The stockpile will be removed as part of the mass grading of the two (2) developments.”

Danville All-Weather Sports Fields – The Danville all-weather sports fields are located in Sycamore Park on Tassajara Road. This is a very impressive facility and well worth visiting for any Commission members who may not have already had the opportunity to see it.

The lighted sports complex accommodates, among other things, a mix of soccer, lacrosse and baseball. No football field lines are currently evident. Some of the lining that is now being used for other sports is somewhat temporary in nature, so perhaps football could be added on a

seasonal basis. The combined field perimeter area is generally enclosed with 20-foot high black chain-link fencing.

Backstops and dugouts are provided for several of the baseball diamonds. Removable pitching mounds and base pads are used so that the flat all-weather field surface can be retained. Some of the adult baseball diamonds have permanent brown colored infields, while other diamonds simply have foul lines. The integration of baseball diamonds with the other field sports appears to be simple, and over-lining of the field area does not seem to be a problem.

With regard to use restrictions, the facility was posted with signs prohibiting motorized vehicles, skates, bicycles, scooters, skateboards, metal cleats, golfing, pets, gum, smoking and sunflower seeds.

Potential Acquisition of Additional Park Space

As indicated at the workshop, the City has been exploring the potential for acquiring the 5-acre site currently identified as future commercial space. This would allow for development of passive recreation elements with approximately 3-acres allocated for water detention to address the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program (ACCWP) adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. While there is no timetable for a decision on this matter, if it occurs, it would present another factor to consider in reorienting the park regardless of the development of an ice facility by Logitech Ice. Specifically, the proposed reorientation creates a more logical open space and effectively “expands” the 17-acre park to approximately 22-acres, divided by the right-of-way reserved for Stoneridge Drive. While the City’s MOU with the County prohibits development within the right-of-way, the two (2) park areas would create a larger sense of open space. Though the Commission is focused on the 17-acre conceptual site plan, it may be beneficial to receive feedback on the park reorientation even if it is not ultimately used for the ice facility.

ALTERNATIVE PARK DIAGRAMS

The two (2) alternative conceptual site plans for Staples Ranch Community Park were prepared by City staff and the project consultants. The plans share the following features:

- Park acreage and boundary configuration.
- Development of an ice skating facility, social passive use area, dog exercise area, tennis courts, bocce ball courts, natural open space, and two all-weather fields for shared use by soccer, football and lacrosse.
- Lighted sports fields and courts.
- Direct access to the arroyo and major open space amenities to the immediate south.
- Vehicular access connections to Stoneridge Drive to the west, and Auto Mall Place to the east. Both concept plans envision the same 10/90 traffic split as proposed at the March 1, 2007 workshop.

- Parking lot configuration and number of spaces.
- Trails and staging areas.

The diagrams differ as follows:

- Concept A does not include a baseball diamond, but Concept B does. This is the only difference in terms of uses between the two (2) concepts. The Concept B baseball diamond includes area for a dirt in-field, thus requiring a greater use of land for sports fields than Concept A.
- Concept A proposes tennis and bocce ball courts at the east end of the site, and Concept B at the west end.
- Concept A proposes a larger dog exercise area than Concept B, due to the area used in Concept B for the larger sports field.
- Concept A proposes restrooms toward the center of the park, while Concept B proposes the western portion.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Following a brief presentation from City staff and project consultants, and public input regarding the proposed conceptual plan, it is recommended that the Commission select a preferred conceptual site plan for review and possible approval at its next regularly scheduled meeting on April 12, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. Wolfe
Director of Parks and Community Services

Attachments: 1. Staples Ranch Community Park Options A and B