

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: January 17, 2023

Subject

Consider Lawrence-Mitty Park and Trail project design direction following community outreach results.

Recommended Action

Approve Lawrence-Mitty Park and Trail project design direction following community outreach results and proceed to Final Concept Design Development.

Summary

The preferred option has been identified as Concept B, "Story Trail" (Attachment A,) with some features from Concept C, "Play It Up." The project team seeks Council approval of the design direction for the final concept plan, considering the responses from the community in Phases 2 and 3, as well as discussions with the Bicycle Pedestrian and Parks and Recreation commissions. With this approval, the project team will proceed with the Final Concept Design Development phase that is required for the CEQA/Environmental review process.

Background

In 2002, the City of Cupertino began work on acquiring, annexing, and developing a neighborhood park on approximately eight acres of land along the westerly edge of Lawrence Expressway near Mitty Way (Lawrence-Mitty.) Of the eight acres, roughly six acres are suitable for park development. Anticipating the inclusion of the area into Cupertino as a new park, the City pre-zoned the parcels as "Park/Recreation" in 2007.

In July 2020, the City Council passed Resolution 20-092, approving the purchase of the Lawrence-Mitty site from the County of Santa Clara for \$2.69 million. The site was situated within the jurisdiction, City limits, and urban service area of the City of San Jose. In April 2022, the Local Area Formation Commission approved annexation of the property into the City. The annexation process was completed in August 2022.

At the City Council Meeting on July 19, 2022, the project team provided an update on the status of the Environmental Summary Report, public outreach process, and next steps in the design process for the Lawrence-Mitty Park and Trail project.

Council received the update and identified several areas of interest:

- safety and crime prevention
- maintenance of the public and vegetated areas
- landscaping improvements with a focus on using native species
- park design options to encourage activity and preserve natural features
- sound walls and/or berms
- stormwater management
- examples of other parks
- continuing outreach

Discussion

With nearly six acres of developable land, the Lawrence-Mitty site has the potential to provide open space and park amenities for the public. The open space adjacent to the creek offers residents opportunities to walk, ride, learn, and play, which is critical for a healthy community. The site proximity to Saratoga Creek and Lawrence Expressway offers unique challenges for access and jurisdictional permissions. The park features proposed will need to balance site constraints and the community's aspirations.

In August 2021, the City released a Request for Qualifications to solicit proposals from qualified professional consultants to develop the Lawrence-Mitty site. In October 2021, MIG, Inc. (MIG) was selected as the consultant for this project and a contract was executed in December 2021. The City worked with MIG to develop a process for implementation of the project. The project has been divided into five phases, which include:

- 1) Existing Site Condition and Technical Analysis
- 2) Community Vision
- 3) Conceptual Design Alternatives
- 4) Draft and Final Plan
- 5) California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Clearance

To date, the project team has completed Phases 1, 2 and 3, and is currently engaged in Phase 4.

Phase 1: Existing Site Condition and Technical Analysis: Environmental Summary Report (ESR)

Key considerations discussed in the ESR include site-specific opportunities and constraints associated with the following elements: site access, noise reduction, easements and utilities, soil conditions (including existing construction and demolition waste,) stormwater management, biological resources, and tree inventory. The ESR provides recommendations and design considerations for each of these elements. The report is available for review at the project's webpage, engagecupertino.org/lawrencemitty.

Phase 2: Community Vision

This phase of the project was one of the initial activities for the project team and centered on outreach endeavors to solicit feedback from the community regarding what was important to them and how they would like to use the future park. A list of those outreach events is listed below:

- The opportunity to provide comments about the project on the 'Engage Cupertino' website at engagecupertino.org/lawrencemitty
- Online survey (Open March 30 to May 23, 2022) (563 responses)
- Two public Pop-up events
 - April 16, 2022, at the Big Bunny 5K (approximately 30 participants)
 - May 7, 2022, at Creekside Park during youth soccer league (approximately 30 participants)
- Virtual Community Meeting (April 27, 2022) (approximately 15 participants)
- Site tour (April 30, 2022) (approximately 60 participants)
- Joint Commission Meeting (June 13, 2022)
- City Council meeting (July 19, 2022)

Phase 3: Conceptual Design Alternatives

After gathering initial community input and guidance at the Joint Commission meeting and City Council, the project team moved into Phase 3 - Conceptual Design Alternatives. The consultant developed three design options based on knowledge of the environmental conditions of the site, community input, and priorities gleaned from the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan.

The conceptual design themes focused on different primary uses of the park. The three alternatives were Concept A - "Wheel Fun," Concept B - "Story Trail," and Concept C - "Play It Up." More information on the features in each design option is included in the November 17, 2022, Parks and Recreation Commission Presentation (Attachment A.)

The project team conducted additional outreach activities to provide information and solicit feedback on the three conceptual design alternatives. Information about the survey and future events was provided to residents using mailings, social media posts, Items of Interest, the City's Engage Cupertino website, and at the events themselves. Those activities were:

- Online community survey (October 3-31, 2022, with 371 responses)
- Community input pop-up at the Cupertino Library (October 8, 2022, approximately 70 participants)
- Lawrence-Mitty site visit (October 15, 2022, approximately 73 participants)
- Virtual community meeting (October 17, 2022, 7 participants from the public)
- Bicycle Pedestrian Commission Meeting Update (November 16, 2022)
- Parks and Recreation Commission Update (November 17, 2022)

The preferred option has been identified as Concept B - "Story Trail," with some features from Concept C - "Play It Up," most notably expanded play areas for a wide range of user types and abilities. This hybrid option, based on community input received by the project team, will be the basis for the next phase of design development.

Phase 4: Design Development/Looking Forward

In this (the current) phase, the project team will develop the Final Concept Plan design based on the feedback received to date, and within the context of the approved funding available for the implementation.

We are looking for Council's confirmation and approval of the design direction for development of the Final Concept Plan. Later, the project team will seek acceptance of the Final Concept Plan by City Council. Design elements included in the Final Concept Plan may be adjusted in consideration of the available project funding for construction.

The plan will then be used to initiate CEQA clearance (Phase 5) as well as provide the basis for the final construction schedule, plans, and budget refinements.

Phase 5: California Environmental Quality Act Clearance

Once a Final Conceptual Plan is developed and accepted, the project team will move into Phase 5 - CEQA Clearance. The final outcome of Phase 5 is approval of the required CEQA document for implementation of the final design. The projected timeframe for CEQA clearance is six months after final acceptance of the final concept plan by the City Council. Once CEQA clearance is obtained, the City will pursue further development of the design and construction documentation.

Next Steps:

With Council's approval of the Concept Design direction, the team will proceed to Final Concept Plan Design Development, and CEQA Clearance phases. Following those phases, the project team will develop construction documentation for permitting and bidding purposes. Construction of the park improvements at the Lawrence-Mitty site are anticipated to begin in 2024. The duration of the construction will be dependent on the requirements of the adopted/final design elements.

If Council does not approve the proposed design direction, the project team will require specific guidance on the revised design direction and clarification on the project team's next steps.

Sustainability Impact

This project aligns with multiple objectives outlined in Chapter 6, Environmental Resources and Sustainability, of the City's General Plan, Community Vision 2015-2040. Development of the Lawrence-Mitty site will emphasize elements of Goal ES-1 to ensure a sustainable future, Goal ES-5 which is to protect the City's urban and rural ecosystems, and Goal ES-7 to ensure the protection and efficient use of all water resources.

California Environmental Quality Act

As noted in this report, CEQA clearance will occur as design is completed and before the City commits to undertaking a defined project.

Fiscal Impact

The current available balance for the project is \$5,952,256 after expenditures for the acquisition and annexation of the property, as well as current design services. No additional funding is required because of this report.

Prepared by: John Raaymakers, Senior Project Manager

Reviewed by: Susan Michael, Capital Improvement Programs Manager

Reviewed by: Matt Morley, Director of Public Works

Approved for Submission by: Pamela Wu, City Manager

Attachments:

A – 11-17-22 Parks and Recreation Presentation