



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Date: March 17, 2026

Subject

Blesch Property Study on Opportunities for Optimal Use

Recommended Action

Receive the presentation and accept staff recommendation on the future use of the property.

Background

The Blesch Property (see Attachment A for aerial exhibit), located at 22050 Stevens Creek Blvd, was acquired by the City in 2014. The approximately 28,000 square foot site is zoned PR (Parks and Recreation) and designated for park and recreational uses under the City's land use framework.

The property is currently developed with a single-family residence. While the structure has been used for auxiliary City purposes since acquisition, it was not originally designed for use as a public facility and is in need of considerable updating and repair if it were to be utilized as a public facility. In addition, the structure is not ADA-accessible, which significantly limits its usability for public or ongoing City functions.

The site is located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zone AE, with more than half of the property situated within the designated floodway. Being in a FEMA designated floodplain results in constraints which substantially limit the feasibility of maintaining or constructing vertical structures on the site and impose additional regulatory requirements, review timelines, and costs for any building construction.

Reasons for Recommendation and Available Options

Given the site's zoning, flood constraints, and existing conditions, staff recommends demolition of the existing structure and conversion of the Blesch Property to park and recreation uses for the following reasons:

- *Consistency with Zoning and Land Use Designations*
The PR zoning designation envisions park and recreational uses rather than long-term

residential or building-intensive functions. Conversion to parkland would align the property's use with its intended purpose.

- *Cost and Usability Considerations*

The existing structure requires substantial investment to address deferred maintenance, modern building standards, and ADA accessibility. Even with such investments, floodplain limitations would continue to constrain its functionality and lifespan.

- *Opportunities for Community-Oriented Open Space*

The site presents an opportunity to provide low-impact, passive recreational amenities. Potential uses could include seating areas with benches and tables, a walking path, a native pollinator or healing garden (particularly appropriate given the site's location within a designated pollinator pathway – Attachment B), and/or a labyrinth (Attachment C)—an amenity which the public has conveyed interest to both Public Works and Parks and Recreation staff.

- *Floodplain Constraints and Risk Reduction*

The presence of FEMA Flood Zone AE and floodway areas significantly restricts the feasibility of retaining or constructing buildings. Avoiding structural development minimizes flood risk, regulatory complexity, and long-term liability to the City.

- *Avoidance of FEMA Review Delays*

Limiting development to non-structural, minimally graded improvements would reduce or eliminate the need for extensive FEMA review and approvals, thereby lowering project risk, cost, and schedule impacts.

Anticipated Costs and Funding Availability

Park projects in the Bay Area typically range from approximately \$75 to \$150 per square foot, inclusive of design, permitting, construction, and project management. Based on these estimates, demolition of the existing structure and conversion to park space is anticipated to cost between approximately \$2 million to \$4 million. The City could utilize park in-lieu fee funds for this purpose, subject to availability and future Council direction. The park in-lieu account currently contains approximately \$16 million, though these funds are also being considered for acquisition and development of parkland at other locations within the City.

Available Options

Below are a few options for consideration:

1. *Approve Staff Recommendation:*

Direct staff to further evaluate concepts and costs associated with demolition of the existing structure and initiate planning for conversion of the property to passive park and recreation uses, with no new building structures and minimal grading to avoid floodway impacts.

2. *Modify the Scope of Park Improvements:*

Direct staff to return with alternative use concepts which could include a parking lot (as was discussed in previous Stevens Creek Corridor concepts) or a mix of uses which may include parking and recreational elements, while maintaining the recommendation to avoid structures and significant grading.

3. *Retain the Existing Structure:*
Direct staff to further evaluate costs, regulatory requirements, and feasibility of rehabilitating the existing structure, including ADA upgrades and floodplain compliance. This option would likely involve higher costs, longer timelines, and ongoing limitations due to flood zone constraints.
4. *Build a New Structure*
Direct staff to evaluate the feasibility of demolishing the existing structure and constructing a new building on the site to support City or Parks and Recreation functions. This option would require compliance with all applicable floodplain and floodway regulations, including review and approval from FEMA. Construction within Flood Zone AE and the designated floodway would likely necessitate substantial technical studies, mitigation measures, and design constraints, significantly increasing project costs and extending project timelines. This option would also require careful consideration of long-term flood risk, maintenance obligations, and consistency with the PR zoning designation.
5. *Defer Action:*
Take no action at this time and retain the property in its current condition, recognizing that deferred maintenance and limited usability of the existing structure would continue.

Next Steps

Provide direction on which option to pursue so that staff can begin preparing a plan for the property.

Sustainability Impact

No sustainability impact.

Fiscal Impact

No fiscal impact.

City Work Program (CWP) Item/Description

Yes FY 25-26

City Properties: Planning for Optimal Use

Future planning strategies for Stocklmeir house/garages, Blech House, Blue Pheasant. Goal of judicial use of city-owned properties. Investigate potential purchase of CUSD Finch/Phil property. Include the McClellan Barn and the house at the entrance of Blackberry Farm.

Council Goal:

Quality of Life

California Environmental Quality Act

California Environmental Quality Act impact.

Prepared by: Chad Mosley, Director of Public Works

Reviewed by: Floy Andrews, Interim City Attorney

Approved for Submission by: Tina Kapoor, City Manager

Attachments:

A – Aerial Photograph

B - Parks and Recreation System Master Plan Map D-1

C – Labyrinth Concepts