

REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council
From the City Manager

March 12, 2018

SUBJECT

Downtown Parks Site Assessment and Feasibility Study

RECOMMENDATION

Receive update on the Downtown Parks Site Assessment and Feasibility Study and provide direction on next steps

BACKGROUND

In 2017, the City Council held a Study Session regarding implementation of the Downtown Precise Plan (DTPP). A key element of the DTPP is to create “a network of great public open spaces.” Following Council discussion at the Study Session, staff conducted a Request for Proposal process to select a firm to conduct a *Downtown Parks Site Assessment and Feasibility Study*. SERA Design and Architecture, Inc. was selected to complete the study.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the feasibility of converting existing City-owned land and its adjacent right-of-way into parks, and to provide recommendations for park development and potential green urban recreation corridors that connect the City’s existing and future public open spaces. The first phase of the study will determine which sites or sites will proceed to the site planning phase. Ultimately, the study will recommend a plan for urban park and corridor development. Following the study, staff anticipate conducting a design process to reshape and build public space for the purpose of recreation, socialization and community health.

The three phases follow this schedule:

Phase 1	Site Assessment & Ranking	Nov. 2017 - March 2018
Phase 2	Preliminary Site Planning & Site Improvement Analysis	March - May 2018
Phase 3	Final Report & Recommendations for Park Development	May - June 2018

ANALYSIS

The Site Assessment and Feasibility Study reports on six prospective locations for Downtown Parks based on criteria such as safety and vibrancy, circulation and connectivity, and potential to host activities and programs. The sites, in no particular order, are:

Site 01: Winslow Street Lot

Site 02: Library Campus/Roselli Park

Site 03: City Hall Lot

Site 04: Marshall Street Garage (top floor)

Site 05: Spring Street Lot

Site 06: Redwood Creek (Bradford Street to Convention Way)

The study also assesses existing conditions such as underground utilities and culverts, trade-offs, cost effectiveness, and parking. The study provides those findings along with opportunities and constraints for each site and a recommended site ranking for Council to consider. The analysis has preliminarily examined the potential costs of repurposing the existing parcels.

During this first phase, City staff have presented the site, evaluation criteria and draft findings to the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission, the Planning Commission and the Complete Streets Advisory Committee (during a joint study session) and to the business community, including the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Group, and the Redwood City Improvement Association. These stakeholders provided substantial feedback that shaped the ranking of the sites. During this process, many participants recommended improvements to Redwood Creek, particularly, development of a creek-side trail that would ultimately connect the few pathway segments built per the North Main Street Specific Plan. There was less support for a large park site. In addition to a downtown site, those commenting expressed significant interest in investing in the creek site at Bradford Street to provide a strategic connection to the City's waterfront.

As the final step of the first phase, the study presents findings and recommendations to Council in the form of a draft report and a presentation. The key recommendations are that the Library Lot and Roselli Park (Site 02) and City Hall Lot (Site 03) move forward to site planning, and that further study be completed on Redwood Creek (Site 06). Staff is requesting that the City Council provide direction on the City-owned site or sites that should proceed to the Site Planning phase of the study.

As part of the Site Planning Phase, City staff will initiate a public engagement process on the recommended locations for further study. Staff envisions the use of a citywide

survey, business outreach, the current Park Needs Assessment study, use of a single day pop-up park at the selected location to engage people passing by, and use of the Redwood City Improvement Association's interactive electronic kiosks. Outreach will seek input on where respondents live and work, what amenities would draw them to the space, and how they might use the space. The community outreach portion of work is not included in the contract with SERA and would require the engagement of a consultant.

The second phase of site planning will further study the opportunities and constraints for the construction of parks at each of the preferred location(s) and will generate site-specific bubble diagrams and recommendations for the type of improvements. The analysis will also examine the costs of the improvement options and amenities. In addition, this phase will identify opportunities to connect existing and proposed public open spaces downtown and develop urban recreation corridors. This phase of the study will be done in close collaboration with the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department and the Community Development Department.

The final task is to present a final report with recommendations for park development to the City Council.

ALTERNATIVES

The City Council could direct staff to assess other parcels, consider new criteria to study, or choose not to recommend a park in the Downtown core.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Downtown Parks Site Assessment and Feasibility Study is funded under the Downtown Parks Planning account 358-85087 of which \$1,000,000.00 was allocated towards the planning, and future improvements and construction. The account currently has a balance of \$900,042.76.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The feasibility study is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The study will be evaluated to determine CEQA requirements.



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PARKS LANDSCAPE DESIGNER



CHRIS BETH
PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR



MELISSA STEVENSON DIAZ
CITY MANAGER

ATTACHMENT:

1. PARKS REPORT