

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: 10/18/04
Prepared Date: 10/11/04
Reviewed By: _____

Subject: Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

From: Melinda Chinn, Recreation and Community Services Director
Ed Phillips, Project Manager

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Approve Resolution #04-50 – A Resolution of the Albany City Council to adopt the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan as recommended by the Albany Parks and Recreation Commission.

BACKGROUND

On January 6, 2003, the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission met to discuss various parks and recreation related issues. The Commission recommended that the Council direct staff to begin the process of retaining a consultant to develop a new Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. The plan's purpose was to create a clear and solid set of goals, objectives, projects, standards and implementation strategies that would provide direction to staff, the Commission and the City Council for development, re-development and enhancement of the City's park system, open space, recreation facilities and recreation programs for the next 5-10 years.

A new Master Plan was necessary because the previous plan had been developed in 1973 and was outdated and obsolete and because Albany voters had just passed Measure F, a \$14.5 million dollar bond measure that included funding for park development and improvements. In addition, the Commission had received numerous requests from special interest groups for proposed modifications and alterations to City parks. The Commission felt that a new Master Plan was necessary to evaluate and assess in the context of the community as a whole, requests based on needs, goals, standards and deficiencies in the park system.

On April 7, 2003, the City Council accepted the Commission's recommendation that a Request for Proposals (RFP) be issued for consulting services to assist in the preparation of the plan. Through the RFP process the City received proposals from five firms, which were winnowed to three firms by a subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Commission heard presentations and interviewed the three finalist firms. On June 12, 2003, the Council accepted the Commission's recommendation to enter into an agreement with Moore Iacofano Goltzman (MIG), to prepare the Master Plan.

Shortly thereafter, MIG began the work on many of the tasks that were necessary for the plan. These tasks included analyzing Albany's demographics, inventorying and evaluating current parks and recreation facilities and the management and operational functions of the Recreation and Community Services Department and the Public Works Division of the Community Development Department.

DISCUSSION

One of the main goals of the Commission was to make sure that the plan truly reflected the unique needs and desires of the Albany community. To accomplish this goal the Commission provided numerous opportunities for receiving public comments and suggestions. As described in more detail in Section 4 of the Plan, the Commission solicited public feedback in three principal ways:

- A random survey of Albany households was conducted which resulted in 321 responses.
- A public "Visioning" meeting attended by 115 participants.
- Interviews with users of sports fields and other facilities in the Albany vicinity.

In addition, the Parks and Recreation Commission discussed the Master Plan at 17 Commission meetings, and at a final review meeting on September 2, 2004. Many of the suggestions for enhancements and improvements to facilities and programs were incorporated into the recommendations listed in the Plan in Section 6.

Prioritization of improvement projects:

The Parks and Recreation Commission engaged in an intensive process of prioritizing some forty suggested improvements to parks, recreation and open space facilities (including acquisitions, new construction and renovations). The Commission held numerous meetings including a special public meeting to elicit feedback on these projects. The highest ranked projects were recommended to the City Council for funding through Measure F.

Master Plan documents:

The Master Plan consists of three levels of documentation:

- The *Executive Summary*, which, if adopted by the City Council contains sufficient policy detail to serve, in practice, as "the Master Plan".
- The *main body of the report* consists of seven sections. The first five sections are introductory and procedural in nature, Section 6 presents recommended policies and actions, while Section 7 analyzes costs and potential funding sources for implementation of the Plan's projects and programs.
- The *Appendices* contain detailed reference and technical data. Of particular interest, Appendix D contains detailed results of the household survey.

Key Findings/Recommendations:

Data from the various studies and analysis conducted by MIG for the Master Plan revealed that

there was need for and strong public interest in, both improved parks and recreation facilities and enhancements to maintenance of facilities and general management of parks and recreation functions. Some key findings were:

- There is a great need for better maintenance, as well as general improvements at all park facilities.
- Acquisition and renovation of the Veterans' Memorial Building as a City facility would enhance the City's ability to provide a wide range of recreational, educational and cultural programs.
- The Ohlone Greenway is the most used park facility and renovation and enhancement would have broad public benefit and support.
- There is need for a new neighborhood park to serve the northwestern quadrant of the City.

The Master Plan recommends City actions concerning parks, open space, sports fields, trails and special use facilities (such as the Community Center). In addition, the Master Plan recommends polices and actions on parks and recreation management, maintenance and programming.

Funding alternatives:

Section 7 of the Master Plan report provides cost estimates for all proposed capital projects, and analyses and identifies current funding available for park and recreation projects, including the Council-approved allocation of Measure F funds. The report also lists additional potential capital resources. Maintenance funding is also reviewed, in terms of projected costs for existing and proposed facilities and potential funding sources. No definitive recommendation is provided for additional capital and maintenance funding; the report suggests that the City should to explore various funding alternatives through further public discussion.

NEXT STEPS

Following adoption of the Master Plan, staff will develop, for Council consideration, specific recommendations regarding the following Master Plan actions:

- Initiate the projects identified for Measure F funds, as prioritized.
- Assess and prioritize proposed maintenance operations improvements.
- Initiate actions to involve sports field users in field maintenance.
- Assess and prioritize recommended improvements to management operations.
- Develop a cost benefit analysis and funding plan for improvement and management of the Veterans' Memorial Building and decide whether to acquire the building.
- Alternatives for funding the capital projects and maintenance recommendations

FISCAL IMPACT

Adoption of the Master Plan goals, polices and actions will not have direct fiscal impact, as each project will be prioritized and scheduled through the CIP process prior to implementation.

Although the Master Plan identifies potential shortfalls of approximately \$2.1 million for capital improvements and about \$120,000 annually in future maintenance costs, the plan suggests a

variety of potential new revenue sources. At this time the Council is not asked to commit to any particular funding method.

Attachments:

Master Plan Document
Appendices

RESOLUTION #04-50

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ALBANY CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT THE
PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the previous City of Albany Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan was completed in 1973 and was obsolete and outdated; and

WHEREAS, a new Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master plan was necessary to create a clear and solid set of goals, objectives, projects, standards and implementation strategies that would provide direction to staff, the Commission and the City Council for development, re-development and enhancement of the City's park system, open space, recreation facilities and recreation programs for the next 5-10 years; and

WHEREAS, the Albany voters passed Measure F in 2002 which included funding for park development and improvements; and

WHEREAS, a new Master Plan was necessary to evaluate and assess in the context of the community as a whole, requests for additions, modifications and alterations to the city parks based on needs, standards and deficiencies in the park system; and

WHEREAS, the firm of Moore, Iacofano and Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) was selected to help prepare the plan; and

WHEREAS, in order to make sure that the plan truly reflected the unique needs and desires of the Albany community, the Albany Parks and Recreation Commission provided numerous opportunities for receiving public comments and suggestions through an extensive public process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Albany City Council hereby adopts the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

JON ELY, MAYOR _____