

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: December 14, 2023

PREPARED BY: Shawn Muir, Community Services Manager

REQUEST: PROVIDE INPUT AND DIRECTION ON NORTH PALM DESERT
COMMUNITY PARK DESIGN

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Provide direction on schematic design for a new community park planned on Dinah Shore in north Palm Desert and approve staff to move forward with design development process.
2. Direct Public Works Staff to finalize the park plans and approvals in accordance with the Millennium Palm Desert Specific Plan.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

On March 26, 2015, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1281 approving the Millennium Palm Desert Specific Plan (MPDSP) and a Development Agreement in north Palm Desert. These approvals reserved a planning area for a future 27-acre City park site to provide residents of the developments with outdoor recreational opportunities. The need for a park in this area is designated by the City of Palm Desert General Plan.

On February 10, 2022, staff requested direction from the City Council on developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for design work related to NSRP. Council directed staff to work with the Parks and Recreation Committee to collaborate with community partners such as Family YMCA of the Desert, The Joslyn Center, and Desert Recreation District on a community-needs-focused design for the park and investigate what potential designs and features of the new park would enable the implementation of their programs. The Council also charged the Parks and Recreation Committee to ensure public engagement was inclusive of the process.

A subcommittee of the Parks & Recreation Commission was formed and held its first meeting on March 15, 2022. Discussion focused on the development of the RFP and suitability of the park site. The subcommittee made a recommendation to the full commission and Mayor Pro Tempore Jonathan that the City consider adding property or changing the park site to accommodate features typical of a regional park.

Staff developed and posted the North Sphere Regional Park Planning and Design RFP. Concurrent to the RFP process, the City Council held a closed session in which staff were directed to provide opportunities to expand the park site. After an additional site was identified to expand or replace the 27-acre site, the RFP was updated. A contract was awarded on August 25, 2022, for the design of two parks in north Palm Desert: one 27-acre community park on Dinah Shore Drive and a separate regional sports park on a parcel located on Portola and Frank Sinatra Drive. The scope of work includes a robust community engagement process culminating in complete construction documents for the community park and 30% design plans for the regional park.

On October 13, 2022, the City Council entered into a Development Disposition and Loan Agreement (DDLA) with a housing developer to convey approximately 0.49-acres of the planned park site to facilitate the development of an affordable housing community called “Palm Villas”. The DDLA is currently active and reduces the area of the planned park site to 0.49-acres.

Public Engagement:

The park has been subject to an extensive and thorough public engagement process. The process included an online survey, two “Open House” events, and a series of focus meetings with stakeholder groups prior to the development of the first conceptual design. The first conceptual design was presented for feedback and comment to:

1. Parks and Recreation Commission (06/06/23)
2. Architectural Review Commission (06/13/2023)
3. Cultural Arts Committee (06/14/2023)
4. Resource Preservation & Enhancement Committee (06/19/2023)
5. General Public Information Zoom Presentation (06/20/2023)
6. Planning Commission (06/20/2023)
7. City Council (06/22/2023)

Following those meetings, a third “Open House” engagement event was held August 5th to relay the feedback collected throughout the conceptual presentation phases and to test perceptions on the feedback received.

The design was further modified to incorporate several of the comments received, as well as to account for commitments the City had made in the development agreement(s) of the abutting development areas that factored two components:

- The dedication of a 75-foot-wide landscape buffer along the entire frontage of Dinah Shore Drive, from the traffic circle to Gerald Ford Drive.
- Accounting for dedications that were made to the Palms Communities development.

The revised design was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on November 7, where additional comments were received. The design was further modified to reflect those comments in preparation for a presentation to the City Council.

Design Description:

Accounting for the required landscape buffer along the Dinah Shore Drive required the elimination of the previously proposed parking lot that had been included. Those parking spaces were shifted to create one single parking lot with an aggregated total of 250 parking spaces. As a result of increasing the parking counts from 170 to 250 and the consolidation of the parking lots, several park elements were shifted. The schematic design still retains all the assets and values that were initially incorporated into the design with edits to the formal resolution of the design.

The design includes the following:

- 250-car surface parking lot
- A large drainage retention basin with a pollution and sedimentation anti-chamber
- Multi-sensory children’s play area with inclusionary elements

- A basketball court
- 4 pickleball courts with wind abatement elements
- Pavilion shelters with BBQ stands
- Continuous, interconnected walkways
- Plazas and garden park areas for adaptive use
- Large and small dog parks
- Multi-use lawn areas

Next Steps:

Based on input by the Council, Staff will finalize design plans for bid and complete necessary approvals required by the Specific Plan. Upon approval of the schematic design by City Council, the consultant design team will begin the design development process and begin the development of the construction plans. The design plans are required to incorporate mitigation measures of the Specific Plan and Development Agreement including sound mitigation along the northern property line of the park and final outdoor lighting plans which comply with the City’s Outdoor lighting ordinance. Plans will be circulated for City Staff review at interim development stages (30-60-90% completion plans), which is expected to be completed by September 2024. The plans will be routed through all agencies having jurisdiction to obtain all necessary and required permits. It is anticipated that permits should be obtained by November and the City will be able to advertise the project for bid to general contractors for construction by January 2025. Construction of the park is estimated to take approximately 16-18 months.

Cost:

Currently, based on an order of magnitude cost reflecting the elements included in the schematic plan, the overall cost for the project is approximately \$15.628 million.

ELEMENT	COST
<i>Retention basin – precise grading, retaining walls, etc.</i>	\$1,362,500
<i>Site preparation for construction</i>	\$ 805,000
<i>Parking lot and drive aisles</i>	\$2,752,500
<i>Walking paths, hardscape area, specialty paving designs</i>	\$3,095,615
<i>Landscape Planting, Sod and Irrigation</i>	\$2,783,325
<i>Lighting</i>	\$2,040,000
<i>Children’s Play Area – Equipment, PIP and Shade Elements</i>	\$1,150,000
<i>Restroom Facility</i>	\$ 650,000
<i>Park Furnishings</i>	\$ 989,000
TOTAL	\$15,627,940

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney’s office.

Strategic Plan:

Parks & Recreation – Priority 1: “Prepare for the financial requirements of maintaining existing parks to the highest level of service. Planning efforts shall also address future costs of replacement and growth of the parks capital improvement fund.”

Parks & Recreation – Priority 2: “Assure a continuing flow of innovative ideas by seeking creative partnerships, ensuring adequate staffing, and encouraging resident input.”

Transportation – Priority 1: “Create walkable neighborhoods and areas within Palm Desert that would include residential; retail; services and employment centers; and parks, recreation and open space to reduce the use of low occupancy vehicles.”

Appointed Body Recommendation:

During its meeting on June 6, 2023, the Parks and Recreation Committee reviewed a presentation on the community park design and provided feedback. Interwest incorporated Committee and community feedback into the design plans and provided a follow-up presentation with the revised designs to the Committee on November 7, 2023. The Committee voted to approve the park design and requested that the City Council consider allowing the fields at the community park be used for organized sports due to the current demand for field space.

Environment Review:

The North Palm Desert Community Park was included in the City of Palm Desert General Plan that was adopted by City Council on November 10, 2016, and was analyzed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in the certified General Plan EIR (SCH No. 2015081020). The North Palm Desert Community Park was also included in the Millenium Specific Plan that was adopted by City Council on March 26, 2015, and was further analyzed for compliance with CEQA in the Millenium Specific Plan Initial Study which concluded that there are no project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its site. Therefore, the Community Park project qualifies for CEQA exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15183-Projects Consistent with a Community Plan or Zoning. Therefore, no further CEQA analysis is required. A CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) proving compliance with the section 15183 exemption criteria will be filed with the County Clerk following final approval for the North Palm Desert Community Park.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

This project was included in the approved Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List for Fiscal Year 2022/23. The estimated budget for the design of the park was \$1.5M, consisting of \$1,000,000 from Parks and Recreation Special Revenue Account No. 2334670-5000201, and \$500,000 in Capital Bond Funds Account No. 4514618-4400100. Additionally, a grant through the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy was awarded in the amount of \$300,000 to assist with park planning.

<i>Award</i>	<i>Expense Account</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Expense</i>	<i>Balance</i>
<i>FY 22/23 Budget Approval</i>	2334670-5000201	\$1,000,000		
<i>08/25/23 Appropriation</i>	4514618-4400100	\$500,000		
<i>08/25/23 C43900 – Interwest</i>			\$1,230,095	
<i>08/25/23 C43900 – Contingency</i>			\$100,000	
	<i>Total</i>	\$1,500,000	\$1,330,095	
			<i>Budget Balance</i>	\$169,905
			<i>CVMC Grant Award</i>	\$300,000
			<i>Project Balance</i>	\$469,905

The Fiscal Year 2023-24 CIP budget included \$5M in both Fiscal Year 2024-25 and 2025-26 for construction of the community park that was identified as unfunded. Once the construction budget is refined, staff will work to identify potential funding sources for the project.