

# CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

---

MEETING DATE: April 24, 2025

PREPARED BY: Shawn Muir, Community Services Manager

SUBJECT: APPROVE FINAL CONCEPT PLAN AND NAME FOR NORTH PALM  
DESERT COMMUNITY PARK (PROJECT NO. CPK00002)

---

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Approve the final concept plan for a new community park planned on Dinah Shore in north Palm Desert.
2. Approve the Park name “Dave Erwin Park”.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

As part of the Millennium Specific Plan in north Palm Desert, a 27-acre park was initially proposed to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for local residents. The City of Palm Desert General Plan identifies the need for a park in this area.

On February 10, 2022, City staff sought direction from the City Council regarding developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the design of the North Sphere Regional Park (NSRP). The City Council directed staff to collaborate with the Parks and Recreation Committee and key community partners—including Family YMCA of the Desert, The Joslyn Center, and the Desert Recreation District—to develop a community-focused park design responsive to programmatic needs. The City Council also emphasized the importance of inclusive public engagement throughout the process.

A Parks and Recreation Commission subcommittee was formed and met on March 15, 2022, to discuss the RFP and evaluate the suitability of the original park site. The subcommittee recommended that the city explore expanding the site or relocating the park to better accommodate regional park features.

An RFP was subsequently developed and posted. Concurrently, staff identified a need to consider additional or alternate park sites that would accommodate the uses and amenities that may be needed to support the city’s growth. A new site was identified, and the RFP was updated accordingly. On August 25, 2022, a contract was awarded for the design of two north Palm Desert parks: a 27-acre community park on Dinah Shore Drive, and a separate regional sports park near Portola Avenue and Frank Sinatra Drive. The scope includes robust community engagement, full construction documents for the community park, and 30% design plans for the regional park.

**Public Engagement:**

The planning process featured extensive public engagement efforts, including:

- Two online surveys
- Four in-person “Open House” events
- Focus group meetings with key stakeholders

The first conceptual design was presented to the following groups for feedback:

- Parks and Recreation Committee – 06/06/2023
- Architectural Review Commission – 06/13/2023
- Cultural Arts Committee – 06/14/2023
- Resource Preservation & Enhancement Committee – 06/19/2023
- General Public (Zoom HOA Presentation) – 06/20/2023
- Planning Commission – 06/20/2023
- City Council – 06/22/2023
- Parks and Recreation Committee – 11/07/2023
- City Council (Initial Approval) – 12/14/2023
- Parks and Recreation Committee – 09/16/2024

Further community feedback was gathered during the 2025 Wildflower Festival and a subsequent Open House event on March 22, 2025, following an updated conceptual design.

**Key Revisions Based on Community Input:**

The conceptual design was updated to reflect public feedback, including:

- A 75-foot-wide landscaped buffer along Dinah Shore Drive (from the traffic circle to Gerald Ford Drive) required by the Millennium Specific Plan Development Agreement
- Relocated primary park access to Dinah Shore Drive
- Repositioned the main parking lot for improved access to amenities
- Addition of community-requested features such as disc golf, a community garden, and bocce ball

The revised design was presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee on September 16, 2024, where additional comments were received. The design was further modified to reflect those comments in preparation for presentation to the City Council.

The design includes the following:

- Two surface parking lots (250-car and 32-car capacity)
- Large retention basin
- Multi-sensory inclusive children’s play area
- Basketball court
- Four pickleball courts with wind abatement features
- Pavilion shelters with BBQ stands
- Interconnected walking paths
- Plazas and adaptable garden spaces
- Large and small dog parks

- Multi-use lawn areas and community garden
- Disc golf, bocce ball, and outdoor fitness equipment

**Next Steps:**

Upon City Council approval of the final conceptual design, the consultant will begin the design development phase, including preparing construction documents. Plan review by City staff is scheduled at the 30%, 60%, and 90% design stages, with final plans expected by November 2025. Permitting is anticipated by December 2025, with construction bids to be advertised in January/February 2026. Construction is projected to begin in March 2026 and take approximately 16–18 months to complete.

**Estimated Construction Cost:**

Based on a rough order-of-magnitude estimate reflecting the final concept plan, the total project construction cost is approximately \$19 million.

<i>Park Feature / Amenity</i>	<b>Estimated Construction Cost</b>
<i>Retaining basin – precise grading, retaining walls, etc.</i>	\$1,650,000
<i>Site preparation for construction</i>	\$805,000
<i>Parking lot and drive aisles</i>	\$2,872,500
<i>Walking paths, hardscape area, specialty paving designs</i>	\$3,241,291
<i>Landscape planting, sod and irrigation</i>	\$3,164,987
<i>Lighting</i>	\$2,040,000
<i>Children’s Play Area and Ninja Course – Equipment, PIP &amp; Shade Elements</i>	\$1,825,000
<i>Community Garden</i>	\$392,500
<i>Restroom Facilities</i>	\$1,300,000
<i>Sound Wall / Fence (Fronting Railroad and Highway)</i>	\$717,750
<i>Park Furnishings</i>	\$989,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,998,028</b>

**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 park’s 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:**

At its meeting on June 6, 2023, the Parks and Recreation Committee reviewed a presentation on the community park design and provided initial feedback. Interwest subsequently revised the

plans to reflect input from both the Committee and the broader community and presented the updated designs to the Committee on November 7, 2023. At that meeting, the Committee voted to approve the revised design and recommended that the City Council consider permitting the use of the park's fields for organized sports, citing the growing demand for field space.

Following further community engagement, an updated conceptual design was presented to the Committee on September 16, 2024. The Committee unanimously voted to advance the design, with two key recommendations:

- Swap the locations of the playground and sports core to improve visibility and accessibility for families utilizing both the basin and playground areas.
- Relocate the splash pad to the center of the park to establish it as a focal feature.

Both recommendations have been incorporated into the final design.

### **Park Naming Subcommittee**

On May 14, 2015, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2015-33, establishing the Parks & Facilities Naming Policy. The policy outlines the following core naming principles:

- A distinct geographic, environmental, or developmental feature
- A neighborhood, community, or access street
- A name of historical significance to the facility
- A reflection of the community's ethnic diversity
- An individual or family who has made significant contributions to the community or facility
- A major donor or corporate entity

The Parks Naming Subcommittee convened on April 30 and September 16, 2024, to discuss naming opportunities for various parks, including five pocket parks in University Park, a future community park, and a planned regional park.

In alignment with the naming policy, the subcommittee determined that the community park should be named in honor of an individual who has had a meaningful and lasting impact on the community. After careful consideration, the subcommittee unanimously recommended naming the park after Dave Erwin, the City's first City Attorney upon its incorporation in 1973.

This recommendation was presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee at its January 7, 2025, meeting. The Committee reviewed and approved the proposal, recognizing Mr. Erwin's enduring contributions to the City and affirming that his legacy reflects the City's core values and mission.

City staff subsequently reached out to Mr. Erwin's family. His wife expressed her appreciation and called the recognition a great honor.

### **Environment Review:**

The North Palm Desert Community Park is identified in the City of Palm Desert General Plan, adopted by the City Council on November 10, 2016, and was evaluated for compliance with the

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as part of the certified General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (SCH No. 2015081020). The project is also included in the Millennium Specific Plan, adopted on March 26, 2015, and further analyzed under CEQA through the Millennium Specific Plan Initial Study. The study concluded that the project would not result in any significant environmental effects that are specific to the site or project.

As such, the Community Park qualifies for a CEQA exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 – Projects Consistent with a Community Plan or Zoning. Additional environmental studies—including traffic, noise, air quality, and lighting analyses—are planned to support and inform the project. Any necessary amendments to the CEQA documentation will be prepared accordingly.

A Notice of Exemption (NOE), documenting the project's eligibility under Section 15183, will be filed with the County Clerk upon final approval of the North Palm Desert Community Park.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

This project is included in the approved Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List for Fiscal Year 2024-25. Current funding for the design cost totals \$1,658,400, which includes comprising \$1,008,400 allocated under Account No. 2334670-5000201 and \$650,000 under 4514618-5000913, bond proceeds.

The FY 2025–26 Capital Improvement Plan includes a \$16 million allocation from the General Fund for the construction of the community park, which was the original estimate. The total estimated construction cost of the project is now \$19 million; however, staff will continue to vet this estimate during the finalization of the construction documents. Thereafter, staff will return to the City Council to request an appropriation for the total project cost. Additionally, staff is pursuing grant opportunities to support the project’s construction.

Construction documents are expected to be completed by late 2025, at which point the project will be advertised for construction bidding.

The table below provides a detailed breakdown of project current costs:

Description	Current Budget	Project Current Cost	Current Balance
<i>FY 2022/23 - 2334670-5000201</i>	\$1,000,000		
<i>FY 2022/23 – 2334670-500201 Transfer</i>	\$8,400		
<i>FY 2023/24 - 4514618-5000913</i>	\$500,000		
<i>FY 2024/25 – 4514618-5000913</i>	\$150,000		
<i>**C43900 – Interwest - Design</i>		\$1,000,000.00	
<i>C43900 – Interwest – Amendment 1</i>		\$230,095.00	
<i>C43900 – Interwest – Contingency</i>		\$100,000.00	
<i>A43530 – HR Green Consulting – Financial Review</i>		\$8,400.00	
<i>C44810 – Answer Advisory – Surveying</i>		\$14,876.47	
<i>C44820 – Marris Services – Pre-Construction</i>		\$178,863.00	
<i>Project Total</i>	<b>\$1,658,400</b>	<b>\$1,532,235.47</b>	<b>\$126,164.53</b>
		<i>CVMC Grant Reimbursement</i>	\$300,000.00
		<i>Project Current Fund Balance</i>	<b>\$426,164.53</b>

\*\*includes cost for North Sphere Regional Park

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Desert Sun Article – Dave Erwin
2. Final Concept Plan