



## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

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December 1, 2020  
Library and Recreation

### **TITLE: APPROVE POLICY DIRECTION TO BEGIN THE DESIGN PROCESS FOR A SKATEPARK AT KEN MERCER SPORTS PARK**

#### **SUMMARY**

The 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the need for an additional skatepark, at least 1/2 acre in size, to meet current community demand (in 2013) and projected that an additional 1 acre skatepark would be required to meet community needs once the City's population reached 78,000 people. At the February 14, 2019 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the Commission identified a new skatepark as their number two priority for the City Council 2019-2020 Two-Year Work Plan Prioritization Process. The City Council adopted the skatepark as priority B for their 2019-2020 workplan with funding slated for the design process 2021-2023.

On November 10, 2020, the Parks and Recreation Commission voted unanimously to move forward with the recommendation to pursue the Ken Mercer Sports Park location for an additional skatepark.

#### **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION RECCOMENDATION**

Recommend City Council approve policy direction to begin the design process for a lighted skatepark at least an acre in size at Ken Mercer Sports Park.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve policy direction to begin the design process for a skatepark at Ken Mercer Sports Park.

#### **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

\$400,000 is budgeted for the Capital Improvement Program budget to hire a design professional to begin work on this project.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified skateparks as one of the City of Pleasanton's recreational deficiencies. The plan identified that the City was currently (in 2013) short on skatepark facilities by 1/2 acre and that an additional 1 acre skatepark would be necessary once the City reached a population of 78,000, the projected build-out of the City at the time. To meet the demands of the community, the master plan recommended adding another skate park at Ken Mercer Sports Park, adjacent to the existing skatepark. The plan also recognized that skateboarding was the sport with the most growth in popularity.

At the February 14, 2019 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the commission recommended the following projects in enumerated priority for the City Council 2019-2020 Two-Year Work Plan Prioritization Process:

1. Inclusionary/All Access Playground
2. Skateboard Park
3. Design Phase I of Bernal Community Farm
4. Implement Phase III of Pioneer Cemetery Master Plan.

City Council conducted a workshop on March 12, 2019 to review the most recent project updates, to allow for public comment on any workplan priority item or its description, and to provide the City Council with an opportunity to reaffirm and/or suggest modifications to the workplan.

At this meeting, the City Council voted to add the skatepark project to the Priority B (fully/partially completed within second year of work plan) ranking for projects with funding slated for 2021-2023.

Following the decision by City Council, the Recreation, Parks, and Landscape Architecture divisions researched and visited various skateparks throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. This research included meeting with staff at the following cities to discuss their skateparks and glean more information:

- City of Fremont
- City of Milpitas
- City of Newark.

These skateparks were determined to be quite popular, well designed and highly recommended by local skatepark advocates for staff to research.

Utilizing the information collected from the site visits, conversations with local advocates and research, staff compiled a checklist of site attributes necessary for a successful skatepark. With these attributes in mind, staff researched and visited a variety of locations within Pleasanton to determine which City properties met the criteria on the list and could accommodate a skatepark.

## **DISCUSSION**

During the research process, the following attributes were determined to be necessary for the success of a skatepark:

- Parking
- Lights
- Natural landscape and grass
- Shade, preferably from trees
- Located where noise is not a concern
- Convenient access to food
- Bike racks
- Access to restrooms.

Local skateparks range in size from 1/4 acre – 1 acre. With the Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommending an additional skatepark of at least 1/2 acre in size and with desirable site attributes in mind, staff reviewed the following locations within Pleasanton as potential skatepark locations:

- Val Vista Community Park
- Bernal Community Park
- Ken Mercer Sports Park
- Staples Ranch (undeveloped location)
- Staff also reviewed the following locations and determined they were not feasible locations for a variety of reasons:
  - Muirwood Community Park
  - BMX Park
  - Tennis and Community Park
  - Amador Community Park
  - Centennial Community Park.

While no location currently met all the site attributes and availability of space, the following locations met most of the site attributes.

### **Ken Mercer Sports Park Option (Attachment 1):**

The current skatepark near Hopyard Road at Ken Mercer Sports Park would either remain, with some repairs required, or be replaced with a similar beginner skatepark design (depending on the feedback received during the planned public outreach process). An additional “next level” skatepark would be placed adjacent to it. This location met all the criteria for ideal site attributes, except no conflicting uses. Conflicting uses include:

- Limited parking compared with the park usage
- Area currently hosts some small contract sport classes that would need to be relocated to another area of the park or another park
- Ken Mercer Sports Park is heavily utilized with current functions, such as: softball, baseball, soccer, football and a future all abilities playground.

Further considerations for this location include:

- Noise and light impacts are consistent with the other existing uses
- Site already has most of the necessary infrastructure
- Shorter design/construction process.

Construction costs for recently bid skatepark projects in the San Francisco Bay Area range from \$1-\$3 million. The cost of construction at Ken Mercer Sports Park would likely fall in the middle to upper part of this range if the skatepark size is approximately an additional 1/2-acre in size because the infrastructure is already in-place for the most part. Construction costs are likely to be even higher than \$3 million if the additional skatepark is an acre or more, or if significant repairs are required for the existing skatepark.

### **Bernal Community Park Option (Attachment 2):**

City staff analyzed Bernal Community Park as a possible skatepark location because it had the potential to meet the ideal site attributes. Two potential locations at this park were reviewed.

The first location identified by staff is in the open space between Valley Avenue and Interstate 680 to the north of the existing detention pond. This location was chosen because there were no conflicting uses, it is close (but not too close) to housing, accessible by nearby paved trails, close to retail, and lighting and noise impacts would be limited because of the proximity of the site to the Interstate. However, upon close review of the Bernal Phase 2 Specific Plan, Bernal Community Park Master Plan, and the voter-approved measures for the Bernal property, it was determined that the first option was still within the 800-ft setback required between lighting and residential housing and would require voter approval to locate the skatepark there.

The second location is adjacent to Bernal Avenue on the very northeastern portion of the Bernal property. This location provides many of the same attributes as the other location—no conflicting uses, not too close to housing, accessible by paved trails, close to retail (downtown), and limited light and noise impacts. This location is also close to Pleasanton Middle School and Hearst Elementary School. This area is within Subarea 2 of the Bernal Community Park Master Plan and there is some flexibility in the amenities that can be included here. This location would require a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission and for City Council to adopt a change to the Bernal Community Park Master Plan.

### **Parks and Recreation Commission Recommendation:**

At the November 10, 2020 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, the site attributes and potential locations were presented to the commissioners. The commissioners voted unanimously to recommend that City Council explore an additional skatepark at Ken Mercer Sports Park. The following feedback was received from the commissioners:

- Pros:
  - Commissioners were impressed with the amount of positive public comments in favor of the Ken Mercer location
  - Commissioners agreed with the public comments and asked for a new skatepark to be as big as possible, (at least 1 acre) and install lighting
  - Commissioners suggested having a new skatepark include a beginner, intermediate and advanced section
- Cons:
  - Commissioners asked if the curbing at the current skatepark could be removed during this process because they believe it is limiting to all skate abilities, i.e. does not allow for skaters with physical limitations to skate directly into the park from all directions
  - Commissioners were concerned with the amount of uses already occurring at Ken Mercer. They support the community's request to place a new skatepark here but believe no further new park amenities should be placed at Ken Mercer moving forward.

**Staff Recommendation:**


Staff recommends adding a new skatepark at Ken Mercer Sports Park. Due to the potential limitations of Bernal Community Park based on the voter-approved measure, the amount of additional infrastructure needed at this site to install a skatepark and the costs associated with that infrastructure, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendation to first expand the Ken Mercer Sports Park skatepark, the community feedback in favor of Ken Mercer Sports Park, and the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation, staff believes the current focus on Ken Mercer Sports Park for a new skatepark will meet community needs.

**Next Steps:**

Upon City Council policy direction, staff will distribute a Request for Qualifications for a consulting firm to assist with the following:

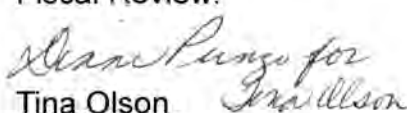
- Review the Ken Mercer Sports Park location to determine the feasibility of an additional skatepark, including identifying opportunities and constraints
- Provide conceptual designs that can be vetted with the community and various committees, commissions, community groups and City Council
- Assist with public outreach
- Identify potential funding sources and opportunities
- Develop an implementation plan.

Submitted by:



Heidi Murphy  
Director of Library & Recreation

Fiscal Review:



Tina Olson  
Director of Finance

Approved by:



Nelson Fialho  
City Manager

Attachments:

1. Overview of Ken Mercer Sports Park Location
2. Overview of Bernal Community Park Locations

