



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

City Council Meeting Date: January 27, 2009
Staff Report #: 09-013



Agenda Item#: F1

REGULAR BUSINESS: Approval of “Conceptual Plan D” for the Kelly Park Improvements Project, Authorization for the City Manager to Amend the Contract with Callander Associates to Add \$343,584 to the Existing \$42,917 Agreement Amount for the Development of Environmental and Construction Documents, and Determination that the Citywide Sports Fields Study is Complete.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Approve “Conceptual Plan D” (Attachment A) for the Kelly Park Improvements Project; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract with Callander Associates to add \$343,584 to the existing \$42,917 agreement amount for the development of environmental and construction documents; and
3. Determine that the Citywide Sports Fields Study is complete.

BACKGROUND

In 2006, the City Council established a goal “to increase the available supply of sports fields to address demand, while maintaining field quality.” Two project priorities were approved by Council in an effort to attain this goal - a Playing Fields Study and a Citywide Sports Field Study. The Playing Fields Study was approved to evaluate and recommend various means of increasing the availability and use of the playing fields at Kelly Park and Burgess Park. The Citywide Sports Field Study was approved to evaluate and recommend the suitability of potential sites throughout the city for new and/or enhanced sports fields.

In November 2007, Council authorized a contract in the amount of \$42,917 with Callander Associates, Landscape Architects, to assist in the performance of both studies and develop conceptual designs (Staff Report #07-202).

ANALYSIS

Playing Fields Study – Kelly Park

The Playing Fields Study began in January 2008 with a focus group meeting held at the Menlo Park Senior Center to identify user needs and neighborhood concerns regarding

potential improvements at Kelly Park. Representatives from field user groups, the neighborhood, City staff, and three members of the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) were in attendance. The meeting resulted in the identification of desired elements including adult-sized soccer and softball fields, track and field components, a perimeter path, and no significant reduction in parking. Artificial turf and field lighting were both identified as desired features to allow more field use throughout the year. A steering committee was formed comprised of the Commission's Sports Field Subcommittee and City staff to work with Callander Associates on developing alternative conceptual plans based on this input.

The Commission met at the Onetta Harris Community Center in February 2008. At this meeting, the Commission and the community were presented with three conceptual improvement plans for Kelly Park, identified as Plans A, B, and C (Attachment B). None of the plans received majority support due to compromises that were made to fit the desired features into the available park space.

The steering committee proceeded to reassess the priorities for Kelly Park and to develop a new conceptual plan. The committee concluded that, given the confines of the existing park space, the baseball/softball field should be eliminated as it was not being used regularly and the community had expressed a preference for a soccer field.

While in the process of developing a new conceptual plan, the East Palo Alto Tennis and Tutoring Program (EPATT)¹ contacted the City and suggested that tennis courts be included as part of the plan. Adding tennis courts would allow EPATT to expand its program to better serve local youth, particularly those in the Belle Haven neighborhood. EPATT proposes to utilize the tennis courts for the athletic programs component and the existing Community Center for its tutoring component. A letter from EPATT describing their program and information about Menlo Park residents served by the program is provided as Attachment C.

In June 2008, the Parks and Recreation Commission again held its regular monthly meeting at the Senior Center. At that meeting, the Commission and the community were presented with Conceptual Plan D (Attachment A). This plan includes a multipurpose artificial turf field large enough to accommodate an adult-sized "U-19" soccer field, a football field or a lacrosse field. A three lane track for running and walking surrounds the field. Adjacent to the track and field are par course stations, field lights, bleachers, a new restroom and maintenance building, two tennis courts and a multipurpose court.

Conceptual Plan D was generally well received by the public and Commission. The Commission voted unanimously to recommend Conceptual Plan D (with the addition of par course/circuit training elements) to the Council as the preferred alternative.

Callander Associates subsequently submitted a proposal for developing environmental and construction documents for Conceptual Plan D (Attachment E).

¹ EPATT is a local, non-profit program that provides a mix of one-on-one academic tutoring and tennis instruction to enrich the academic, athletic, and social skills of local youth. EPATT currently operates at Stanford University and has over 100 participants (www.epatt.org).

Playing Fields Study – Burgess Park

In May 2008, City staff began discussing options for Burgess Park with field user groups. Staff met with a representative of the Alpine/West Menlo Little League (League) to discuss potentially converting the existing baseball infield from dirt to turf. This would expand the area available for soccer games to the size needed for an adult-sized (“U-19”) soccer field. The League representative indicated that the proposal would be agreeable and staff proceeded with development of conceptual plans.

The conceptual improvement plans for Burgess Park were presented to the Commission in July 2008 (Attachment F). Three options were presented:

- Option 1 - Convert the existing dirt infield to natural turf
- Option 2 - Convert the existing dirt infield to natural turf and add field lighting
- Option 3 - Convert the existing dirt infield and natural turf areas to artificial turf and add field lighting

The Commission received comments from the public on the three options, then voted unanimously to recommend implementation of Option 1 to the Council.

After the Commission’s vote, representatives from the League contacted the City expressing concerns about Option 1 and indicating that they would prefer that the existing dirt infield remain as there are no comparable facilities available nearby. In addition, further analysis of the field’s usage revealed that the space is currently fully scheduled and that expanding the turf area to allow an adult sized soccer field (without also converting to artificial turf or installing lights to allow for night use) could result in displacing the current younger soccer groups away from Burgess Park. The Commission considered this information, and currently recommends that improvements at Burgess Park be deferred until after Kelly Park improvements have been completed.

Citywide Sports Field Study

The Citywide Sports Field Study began with a review of approximately two dozen sites throughout the City that could be suitable for development of City sports fields. Staff presented conceptual layouts for the sites to the Commission’s Sports Field Subcommittee. Most of the sites were located on private property and not zoned for sports field use. The only site that was readily suited for sports fields was Flood County Park.

Staff met with representatives from the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department to discuss a potential shared use and operations-maintenance arrangement. County staff indicated there would be interest in pursuing an arrangement that might include improvement and maintenance of sports fields by the City in exchange for the right to schedule the use of those fields. Flood Park is in need of renovation and the County does not currently have plans for any improvements. Attachment G shows preliminary concepts of possible field configurations for Flood Park.

According to preliminary plans, the Menlo Park City School District intends to construct larger (U-12 or U-14) soccer fields at both Oak Knoll and Hillview Schools. Such improvements would increase the amount of field space available at both sites, which are both currently maintained by the City under joint-use agreements. Once Kelly Park and the school sites are completed, staff and the user groups will have a better understanding of the need for additional sports fields, if any. Burgess Park and Flood Park could then be revisited if additional space was needed. Staff believes it would be prudent to consider improving or expanding fields that the City presently maintains before considering new fields such as Flood Park.

Staff presented the Parks and Recreation Commission with a three-phased plan to address sports fields in the City. The plan involves proceeding with improvements at Kelly Park first, followed by reviewing utilization of Burgess Field and evaluating the need for improvements, followed by potential upgrades at Flood County Park. The Commission approved the phasing of the fields as recommended by staff above at its November 19, 2008 meeting.

Next Steps

Staff recommends amending the existing contract with Callander as an efficient and cost effective means of completing the next phase of this project. Staff believes that Callander has provided satisfactory service on this and other City projects. Preparation of environmental and construction documents for Kelly Park was budgeted as part of the 2008-09 Project Priorities.

If the Council authorizes the amendment to the agreement with Callander Associates, the environmental document is anticipated to be presented to the Planning Commission and the City Council during summer 2009. Construction documents would be completed during fall 2009, with construction completed in summer 2010.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

The estimated cost to construct improvements at Kelly Park as shown on Plan D is approximately \$4.2 million. The estimate includes the purchase of specialized equipment needed to maintain artificial turf and an escalation factor to account for inflation between the time the cost estimate was developed and the time the field is likely be constructed if approved (i.e. early 2010). A detailed estimate is provided as Attachment D.

The proposed contract amendment with Callander Associates will add \$343,584 to the original contract amount of \$42,917 for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$386,501. Sufficient funds were budgeted in FY 2008-09 for this purpose in the "Kelly Park Improvements Project" which includes \$575,000 from the Redevelopment Agency Tax Increment Bond CIP Fund.

The Citywide Playing Fields study was budgeted in FY 2007-08 with \$45,000 in funding from the Rec In-Lieu Fund. Costs for the study to date have totaled \$11,500.

Several major projects that will be vying for available funding are currently in the planning stage, including the Burgess Gymnasium, the Burgess Gymnastics Center, Kelly Park improvements and the school district field renovation projects. The Council had budgeted \$630,000 of Measure T funds toward renovation of fields at Hillview School. The school district subsequently announced plans to renovate the school site, and so the Council postponed any investment into Hillview School fields until the District finalized its plans. The City is not obligated to spend any funds on the field, but does anticipate that the District will request financial participation from the City.

Staff will provide the Council with periodic updates on the status and cost of each of these projects, along with recommendations for funding each.

POLICY ISSUES

This recommendation does not represent any change to existing City policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The capital improvements proposed for Kelly Park meet the definition of a “project” under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. An Initial Study is required and may lead to an Environmental Impact Report. These environmental documents are included in the scope of work recommended in the contract amendment with Callander Associates.

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PUBLIC NOTICE: Public Notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. [Recommended Plan for Improvements to Kelly Park](#)
- B. [Early Conceptual Plans for Kelly Park Improvements](#)
- C. [EPATT Letter](#)
- D. [Detailed Cost Estimate for Recommended Kelly Park Improvements](#)
- E. [Callander Associates Proposed Scope of Work for Preparing Environmental and Construction Documents for Kelly Park](#)
- F. [Burgess Park Conceptual Plan](#)
- G. [Preliminary Flood County Park Conceptual Plans](#)