



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: May 24, 2022

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Community Development,
Community Services

TITLE: **Status Update—Los Altos School District
School and City Park Master Planning**

RECOMMENDATION

Review and accept the status update on the master planning for the Los Altos School District school and City park site.

BACKGROUND

Prior City-LASD Agreements

In January 2018, the City Council took several actions to support the Los Altos School District's (LASD) acquisition of a new school site in the San Antonio Area, including the creation of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program to help fund LASD's property acquisition and commitment of City Park Land Dedication funds toward at least four acres of joint-use open space (JUOS) on the future school site. Council also authorized an initial round of Gatekeeper requests for projects seeking to use the majority of the TDR square footage generated by the LASD TDR Program. The TDR Program initiated a plan for collaborative City-LASD master planning of the future school site to determine the desired layout and amenities of the JUOS.

In April 2019, the City and LASD executed a Funding and Joint Use Agreement (see Attachment 3) to define the more specific terms and conditions of the mutually beneficial partnership between the City and LASD for the JUOS on the future school site, for which the City contributed \$23 million in Park Land Dedication funds to help meet LASD funding needs for the JUOS portion of the site acquisition. According to this agreement, the City's financial support would help achieve roughly four acres of JUOS on which recreational amenities would be built by LASD and improve publicly accessible open space resources in the San Antonio neighborhood during nonschool hours. At this time, LASD had identified a new approximately 11.65-acre parcel at the northeast corner of San Antonio Center as a promising acquisition for the future school site.

In November 2019, the City executed an Open Space Park Property Transfer Agreement with LASD to purchase two acres of land from LASD for \$20 million. This park area was available for

purchase by the City because LASD anticipated they would only need around 9.65 acres of the planned property acquisition for the future school and JUOS, leaving additional land available for City park use. This property purchase agreement added scope to the previously identified JUOS master planning to separately identify the location and boundaries of the City’s park site from LASD’s school site. In compliance with prior agreements, LASD completed purchase of the 11.65-acre school site around December 2019, and City and LASD staff began discussing the master planning process in February 2020. Early master planning work was slowed by COVID-19 workloads and priorities.

Additional background on the TDR Program and prior agreements is provided in Attachment 1—[Study Session Memo dated October 26, 2021](#). Council direction from this Study Session is discussed below.

City Council Study Session on Master Planning Work

On October 26, 2021, the City Council held a Study Session to receive a general update on the collaborative master planning work with LASD and consider initial recommendations from City staff on the City park location. By consensus, Council supported staff’s recommended park location (see Figure 1) and staff’s continued collaborative work with LASD to maximize the park’s size.

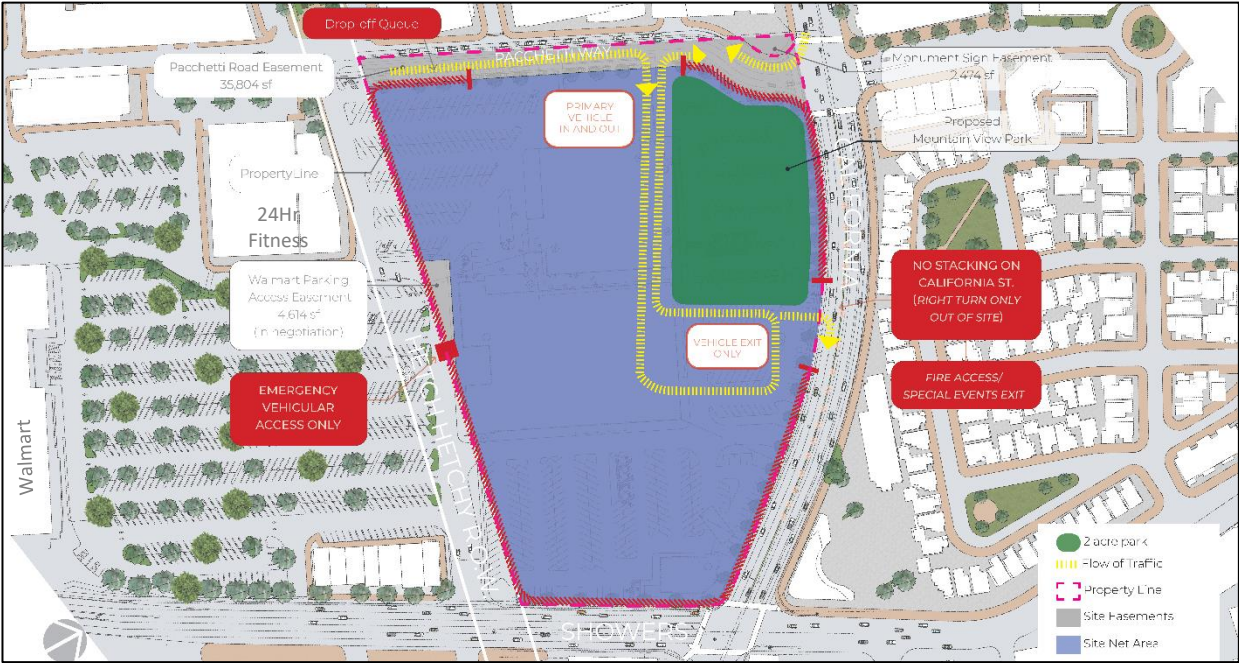


Figure 1: City Park Location

Council also supported the City park being developed through the City’s typical design process and being open to all, including when the LASD school/JUOS site is not accessible. Further, Council provided input on key considerations identified in the Study Session memo as guidelines for prior and future master planning and design work.

Additional Council preferences included:

- Working with LASD to maximize City utilization of the JUOS.
- Balancing neighborhood/community and league use of the JUOS during nonschool hours.
- Incorporating some passive uses into the JUOS and/or City park site.
- Providing high-quality bike and pedestrian access.
- Providing robust community input opportunities.

Prior LASD Board Input

Also in October 2021, LASD staff presented a similar master planning update to the LASD Board of Trustees to provide an opportunity for the Board to ask questions and give general feedback or direction on the master planning work to date. The Board indicated they appreciated the collaborative master plan work and generally agreed with the recommended City park and LASD school site locations. The Board supported continued collaborative work to complete the master planning.

ANALYSIS

With consensus on the City park location, the master planning work has begun to evaluate different configurations for the future school building and JUOS, which resulted in just two recommended location options meeting mutual design objectives (see Attachment 2—JUOS Master Plan Materials). The JUOS location is the subject of this update, but several more detailed JUOS design topics are still being analyzed and discussed by staff and will be presented for community input before returning to Council for final review later this year.

School Building and JUOS Locations

In order to test viable school and JUOS locations, the master planning work has employed certain size and configuration assumptions for both the school building and JUOS amenities. However, it is important to note that these design assumptions were used only to evaluate feasible layouts of the JUOS and school building locations and are not intended to establish final programming or

design of either improvement. The City staff-recommended option places the JUOS immediately south of the City park location, along the Pacchetti Way entry drive into the San Antonio Center and the Hetch Hetchy right-of-way, and leaves the eastern quadrant of the school site for the school building and gym (see Figure 2).

LASD Board Input

In late February 2022, LASD staff met again with the LASD Board to provide an update on master planning work. As part of those discussions, the LASD Board emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum for the school design process and identified a preference for the future school building to be located at the corner of Showers Drive and California Street. This school building location preference will support LASD staff and consultant's initiation of the environmental review process and continued development of the detailed school design.

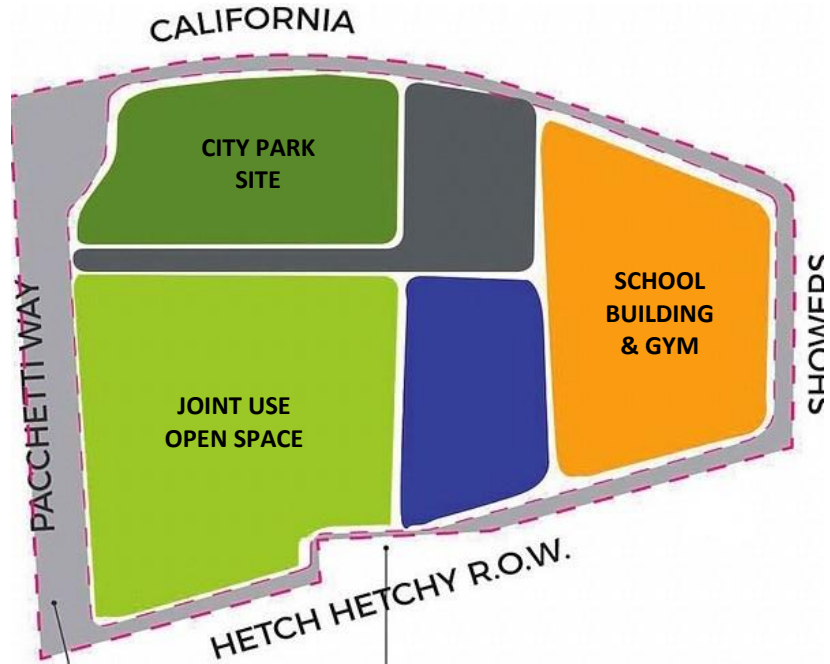


Figure 2: Preferred School/JUOS Site Layout

City Staff Analysis

As noted above, City staff has reviewed the LASD school/ JUOS location options and supports the LASD Board's preferred layout for the following reasons:

- San Antonio Precise Plan (SAPP): The recommended site layout addresses two fundamental SAPP strategies and objectives:
 - Open Space Planning: Although the SAPP did not envision this specific school and open space development in San Antonio Center, the proposal helps to meet several open space policies, especially the creation of centralized and easily accessible open space areas to transform the character and appearance of the Plan area. The proposed JUOS and City park locations also build on the SAPP's linear greenway

concept: expanding the planned north-south greenway along the east side of the Pacchetti Way entry drive into more significant open space areas at a key public-private interface, without the need for private development to create the areas. For reference, the LASD and City park property is outlined in Figure 3—SAPP Open Space Plan.

- Urban Design: SAPP policies and standards also call for new buildings to be located close to and designed to activate streets through varying and visually engaging facades, particularly at key corners. These SAPP objectives support locating the LASD school building at the corner of Showers Drive and California Street, as proposed.
- Master Planning Key Considerations: The recommended option also addresses key master planning considerations supported by Council at the October 2021 Study Session:



Figure 3: SAPP Open Space Plan

- JUOS and City Park Proximity/Synergy: Collaborative master plan work identified a priority for the City Park and JUOS to be located adjacent to each other, separated only by access roads or parking areas (if anything). The proposed layout meets this objective better than the alternative option as the City park and JUOS would likely be separated only by the school driveway, whereas the alternative option would likely feature a larger parking area between the City park and JUOS areas.
- Limited Conflicts with City Streets: A key shared master plan priority is safe, multi-modal access and limiting conflicts with City streets. The proposed option meets this objective better than the alternative by providing greater separation between the JUOS and surrounding public streets. In the alternative option, which places the JUOS at the corner of Showers Drive and California Street, the anticipated active outdoor uses might help activate the frontage. However, it also presents potential conflicts between sports fields and City street operations with limited buffer area available. If the sports fields are constructed with lights that allow evening use, those lights would also be located in closer proximity to lower-density residential areas to the north and east of the school site.

NEXT STEPS

With agreement on the recommended JUOS location, staff plans to proceed with more detailed collaborative JUOS design tasks in order to follow up on direction and requests for further information provided by Council at the October 2021 Study Session, as summarized below:

- **JUOS Configuration and Amenities:** Based on the recommended JUOS location, City staff will work with LASD staff to continue to analyze and design the JUOS amenities, including the ball field, soccer field, and track identified in the Funding and Joint Use Agreement as minimum requirements for the area. Preliminary analysis has determined a competition track will not be feasible, but a walking/jogging track could be designed around a softball/baseball field and soccer field. Staff will also work with LASD staff to evaluate more detailed topics such as JUOS lighting, ball field buffers, and other amenities.
- **Circulation Planning and Net Site Area:** Council previously supported continued work with LASD to analyze efficient roadway designs for the Pacchetti Way entry drive, which might yield additional usable area for the City park. With the JUOS location established and upcoming work on JUOS amenity layouts (above), staff can better analyze the existing and SAPP-planned roadway and streetscape design to identify any opportunities to turn existing roadway easement area into usable City park and JUOS area while addressing the multi-modal access needs of San Antonio Center.
- **Public Use and Site Security:** Council previously requested staff return with additional analysis of anticipated City/public access hours and opportunities to maximize City use of the JUOS. Access and design considerations will be brought back to Council after further collaborative work with LASD as well as community outreach.
- **Agreement Updates:** As previously noted, the originally anticipated timeline for development of the JUOS is no longer accurate given COVID-19 delays to the master planning and design processes for the site. Staff anticipates a formal request will be made by LASD to amend the Funding and Joint Use Agreement, at minimum, to update the completion deadline for the JUOS.

City staff anticipates conducting community outreach on these work plan items before returning for final Council input about the JUOS. Staff currently expects the JUOS configuration, amenities, public use, and site security items will be brought back to Council in late 2022 or early 2023, similar to the City park location Study Session in October 2021, along with updates on the circulation planning, net site area, and the proposal to update existing LASD-City agreements. Council will be asked to consider authorizing the City Manager or designee to execute any requested amendments to the existing agreements (summarized in the Background section of this report).

In addition to the collaborative tasks discussed above, LASD and City staff respectively will be commencing detailed design work on the school and park sites under separate timelines and processes:

- School Design and CEQA: As noted earlier in this report, the LASD Board has prioritized the design process for this school site and plans to initiate environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as soon as possible with more detailed school site design proceeding through an LASD-led public process commencing later this year. If the design, CEQA, and permitting processes kick off pursuant to the currently anticipated timing, LASD staff anticipates construction could begin as soon as late-2024, based on a goal for completing construction in time for the 2026-2027 school year.
- City Park Design: As previously noted at the October 2021 Study Session, the City park site is already identified in the City's Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), with funding programmed to initiate the City's park design process starting in Fiscal Year 2024-25.

CONCLUSION

This report provides an interim update on ongoing collaborative work with LASD to master plan the future City park and LASD school sites in the San Antonio Center, in particular to identify the anticipated JUOS location and share LASD Board input on the preferred school building location on the LASD school site. The collaborative work on the JUOS configuration will return to Council for input on key remaining topics after further analysis with LASD and community outreach.

PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting.

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- Attachments: 1. [Study Session Memo Dated October 26, 2021](#)
 2. JUOS Master Plan Materials dated April 2022