

**DATE:** April 12, 2023

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission and Urban Forestry Board

**FROM:** Faryal Saiidnia, Senior Project Manager  
David O. Printy, Principal Project Manager  
Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

**VIA:** Dawn S. Cameron, Public Works Director

**SUBJECT:** Villa Park Conceptual Review and Recommendation, Project 21-61

---

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. Review and comment on the Villa Park Conceptual Plans and recommend a preferred conceptual plan for approval to the City Council.
2. Select at least two names for City Council consideration for the new park.

**BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

The proposed 0.39-acre park site located at 1720 Villa Street was dedicated to the City for park use by the developer of the 1720 Villa Street development project (see Figure 1). In April 2021, Council approved Villa Park, Project 21-61, as part of the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Council approved a professional design services agreement with SSA Landscape Architects on [January 25, 2022](#).

A similar small park project, which is currently being referred to as Evelyn Park, was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) on [November 9, 2022](#) and [March 8, 2023](#) to obtain its recommendations to Council for the conceptual plan and for naming the new park. The PRC discussed the concepts presented at the meetings and provided feedback on changes to features and themes. As a result of the Villa Park community process being similar to Evelyn Park, and anticipating similar PRC feedback for Villa Park, staff reviewed PRC's past feedback, worked with the consultant to provide more information in this report, and revised the concepts previously presented at the community meetings to incorporate similar themed comments in advance.



Figure 1: Project Location

### Site Description

The project site (approximately 202' wide and 80' deep from the street) was used as a staging area by the developer of the 1720 Villa Street housing project during its construction. The housing project was recently completed, and the developer installed temporary irrigation and grass on the site for the community to use as open space while the park is in design. The developer will maintain the project site at no cost to the City and the temporary improvements will be removed prior to the start of construction.

The surrounding neighborhood of the planned park includes single-family residential homes across the street, single-story homes to the east, a two-story leasing office to the west, and three-story apartment homes to the north. There are additional five-story apartments in the development setback behind the three-story apartments along the park boundary. The nearest City parks are Rengstorff Park, located one-half mile to the west, and Mariposa Park, a mini-park located 1,000' south of the planned park site.

## **Community Meetings**

Two community meetings were held for the future park. Community Meeting No. 1 was held on August 23, 2022, to obtain community input on the design and amenities of the new park. Three people attended the in-person meeting and provided input on the park design. The consultant team obtained feedback based on discussion of the existing conditions of the site and conducted a dot sticker voting poll. The poll helped to gauge the features the attendees desired for the park, which included shade structures, nature themes, and adult game areas.

Community Meeting No. 2, held on October 18, 2022, was attended by five members of the community, and three conceptual park plans were reviewed (see Attachment 1). All of the concepts included features and amenities supported at the first meeting.

Following a presentation of each concept, attendees voted using color-coded stickers to indicate their preferences. Overall, Concepts B and C obtained the most favorable votes with suggested modifications to include a nature theme with natural climbing elements and adding game tables. Park themes were suggested by the community, which included nature, NASA/airplane, printing press/books, butterflies, stars, trains, and dinosaurs. Nature was the most requested theme at the community meetings and via public email input, with natural play structures requested, such as climbing logs or rocks. A star theme was also suggested in relation to the “Estrella Park” name (see Park Naming section further in this memo).

In addition to community meetings, email input was received from 18 members of the public to submit park theme, amenity, and name suggestions. Staff provided information to the Shoreline West Association of Neighbors (SWAN), which included project and meeting information in an email update to approximately 300 communication subscribers.

Typically, after staff receives community input on the concepts, one preferred concept is developed and presented to the PRC. Concept C did not include a playground, which is atypical of parks in Mountain View, and staff would have further developed either Concept A or B as both had playground features.

## **Recent PRC Input**

At the previous two PRC presentations of the Evelyn Park concepts, the PRC provided feedback and direction to further develop a revised and recommended concept. Given the similar size and program, staff considered many of the Evelyn Park comments relevant to the conditions at the Villa Park project. Rather than move forward with a recommended concept based only on the community feedback received for Villa Park, the design team incorporated similar themes heard into two refined and recommended conceptual designs derived from Concepts A and B (see Attachment 2 for Concepts D and E, Figures 1 and 3).

**Table 1: Recent PRC Input and Incorporated Villa Park Elements**

Recent PRC Input	Incorporated Villa Park Elements for Both Alternatives
Relate park design to the building architecture and circulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West park entry point expanded to flow into adjacent wide pathway/building lobby entrance.</li> <li>• Park’s south/main entry plaza links to recently installed raised crosswalk on Villa Street.</li> <li>• Added second park entry point along Villa Street at southwest corner.</li> </ul>
Provide lawn area and consider expansion.	Increased turf area by approximately 25%.
Incorporate central gathering area.	Included.
Consider effects of shade from adjacent buildings on park design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site solar study included. (See Attachment 3.)</li> <li>• Park is south-facing, with generally low buildings adjacent, where the site receives nearly full sun throughout the year.</li> </ul>
Align park features with program of the adjacent development.	Adjacent development includes multiple gathering areas, small dog park, and barbecue areas for private residences only. No playground features within development. Therefore, playground included.
Avoid creation of fragmented spaces within park.	Increased size of central plaza space on Concept D to connect play and turf areas with more flow.
Consider both a greater quantity of trees or larger trees.	Increased size of some trees, added trees for additional shade at picnic areas.
Consider a specimen tree.	Added a specimen tree.
Consider utilizing native trees and pollinator planting species.	Added native trees and pollinator plantings.
Remove rear park entry pathway to park linked from adjacent development for neighbor privacy.	Removed rear park entry point.

Similar to the concepts presented at the October 18, 2022 community meeting, amenities in Concepts D and E include a play area, benches, picnic tables, bike racks, and a drinking fountain. Other features similar in both revised concepts include:

- Retaining wall added to increase usable space. Retaining wall needed to account for the ~3' grade difference between the front and rear of the park site (rear is lower) and to have the park site be compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
- Utilizing the existing private pathways surrounding the park to improve circulation and allow more space for park amenities.
- Using neutral-color play surfacing.
- Incorporating natural play elements.
- Including Pollinator plantings and native trees.
- A row of trees and other screening features are placed along the Villa Street frontage.
- Trees are placed adjacent to the eastern neighbor's unpaved EVA area.
- The location of programming elements allows for a fluid experience.
- Cross sections are included in Attachment 2, Figures 2 and 4, to illustrate the park's relationship with the development.

Modifications to the concepts presented at the October 18, 2022 community meeting now include larger open lawns and gathering spaces, as well as natural play structures and shaded seating areas (upon tree maturation). Key differing features for each concept are:

- Concept D (see Attachment 2, Figure 1) provides a larger central plaza space with picnic tables, provides a gathering area surrounding a focal specimen tree, additional plantings and bench seating in the plaza, and a low fence all along the street side of park. This concept also has increased the size of trees as well as added trees for shaded seating at the plaza near picnic area.
- Concept E (See Attachment 2, Figure 3) includes a larger, more linear, main plaza and flexible gathering space along the street entry side, added bench seating throughout the park and game tables, and includes a mix of larger and medium-sized trees.

Similar to other parks, no overhead lighting is planned due to the park closing one-half hour after sunset per the City Code (Section 38.13). On-street parking along Villa Street and Chiquita

Avenue will be available for park visitors, and an on-street accessible parking stall will be installed during park construction along Villa Street adjacent to the park.

There will be a public art component included in the park. Staff will follow City Council Policy K-5, which involves the Visual Arts Committee (VAC) selecting the artist and art. Once the park concept is approved by the City Council, the VAC will begin their process.

Staff is requesting the PRC recommend one of the two concepts to the City Council for approval.

### **Park Naming**

Staff initiated the park naming process at the second community meeting and posted a notice on the City website as well as Nextdoor to solicit responses through January 31, 2023.

Criteria were provided for naming a new park based on City Council Policy K-17. The Policy states a park may be named for a school on which it is located, an adjacent street, a local landmark, or historical figure. Other park names will be considered only if one of the above criteria do not provide a name suitable for the park. The PRC is required to submit at least two names to the City Council for consideration and final name selection.

Staff received a number of park name suggestions from the public. The following park names were submitted by the deadline for the PRC's consideration:

**Table 2: Park Name Suggestions for Consideration**

<b>Suggested Park Name</b>	<b>Council Policy K-17 Relevance</b>
Villa Park	Street name adjacent to park.
Estrella Park	Name of a historical social club ("Club Estrella") within the community, to honor the Mexican community that was displaced near Washington Street/Jackson Street by the Bailey Avenue widening in 1969.
Bailey Park	Former State Assembly member Dr. Bowling Bailey, from which Bailey Avenue was named.
Bailey Park	To honor the Mexican community displaced by Bailey Avenue widening in 1969.
Villa-Chiquita Park	Street names adjacent to park.
Chiquita Park	Street name adjacent to park.
Doris Gates Park	American children's fiction author born in Mountain View.

<b>Suggested Park Name</b>	<b>Council Policy K-17 Relevance</b>
Rosemary Stasek Park	Former City Councilmember and Mayor, supporter of parks.
Villa Francesca Park	Name of Castro family's final home in Mountain View.
Mary Lou Zoglin Park	Former City Councilmember and proponent of recreation facilities and expanded programs in the City.

<b>Other Suggested Park Names</b>	
"Elm" Villa Park (or name of tree type to be planted and Villa Park)	Villa Nuevo
Benediktas Mikulis Park	Rube Goldberg Park
Marigold Park	Shane H Park
Fraley Park	Higuerita Park
Nino Park	

As stated, there are specific requirements in Council Policy K-17 for the selection of park names. The following are some examples of applying Council Policy K-17 criteria to some of suggested names.

### **Street Adjacent to Site**

"Villa Park," "Chiquita Park," and "Villa-Chiquita Park" were suggested by residents based on the future park location being adjacent to Villa Street and Chiquita Avenue. Any one of these three suggested names are appropriate for the new park.

### **Local Landmark**

"Bailey Park" was suggested by residents based on the future park location proximity to the original Bailey Avenue (which was renamed Shoreline Boulevard), and to honor the Mexican American community displaced near Washington Street/Jackson Street by Bailey Avenue (renamed Shoreline Boulevard) widening in 1969.

"Estrella Park" was suggested by three residents based on the future park proximity to Shoreline Boulevard, similarly to honor the same Mexican American community displaced (see Attachment 4). Club Estrella (which still exists) was the primary social club of the Mexican American community that was displaced by the Bailey Avenue project. From a geographic standpoint, names honoring the Mexican American community displaced by Bailey Avenue's widening may be most appropriate north of Central Expressway (the Mexican American community was centered on Washington Street/Jackson Street at Bailey Avenue). Therefore,

renaming Jackson Park (named after Jackson Street, which is, in turn, named after President Andrew Jackson) to Estrella Park may be more appropriate. It is unclear if this suggestion is eligible based on the criteria set in Council Policy K-17, which states a park can be named for a local landmark, as Club Estrella was a social club, not necessarily a local landmark.

With assistance from the Mountain View Historical Association, staff connected with and discussed the name nomination with the president of Club Estrella. Based on the discussion, they were very supportive of naming the park in honor of Club Estrella and the local Mexican American community. They provided additional information including that the club was founded one mile away from the future park, at 582 Church Street, and the club's purpose was to promote Mexican American culture in a social atmosphere as well as to assist the poor and needy of the City of Mountain View. The Club Estrella motto for the last 75 years has been "Fe, Amistad, y Progreso," "Faith, Friendship, and Progress."

Another suggestion was to include park signage to educate the public about the history of the Mexican American community that once lived on Bailey Avenue, regardless of the final park name.

### **Historical Figures**

"Doris Gates Park" was suggested by residents based on being a renowned author and editor of literary works for children, born in Mountain View.

"Bailey Park" was suggested by residents based on local resident and former State Assemblymember Dr. Bowling Bailey, from which Bailey Avenue was named.

The PRC is required to submit at least two names to the City Council for consideration and final name selection. After reviewing all names on the list and the application of Council Policy K-17, staff recommends the PRC submit Villa Park and Estrella Park as the two names for Council consideration.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Villa Park, Project 21-61, is currently funded in the amount of \$2,150,000 from the Park Land Dedication Fund. The estimated construction cost for all concepts presented are within the construction budget of \$1.7 million.

### **PROJECT SCHEDULE**

Staff will submit the PRC-recommended concept and park names to Council for final approval in June 2023. Following Council approval, the design consultants will prepare detailed plans, which are scheduled to be completed in early 2024.



## **PUBLIC NOTICING**

In addition to the standard agenda posting, property owners and residents within an expanded area of 1,000'+ of the park received notices of the PRC meeting. A notice was also placed on the City's website, on Nextdoor, and with the SWAN neighborhood association.

FS-DOP-AE/AF/8/CSD

224-04-12-23M

203004

- Attachments:
1. Original Concepts A, B, C
  2. Concepts D and E, Cross Sections
  3. Solar Study
  4. Email Park Name Suggestion—Estrella Park
  5. Letter of Support

cc: PWD, APWD—Arango, PPM—Printy, SPM—Saiidnia, F/c (21-61)