



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: June 13, 2023
CATEGORY: Consent
DEPT.: Public Works
TITLE: **Villa Park, Project 21-61—Various Actions**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Find that in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act requirements, Villa Park, Project 21-61, is categorically exempt as Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, under California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15304.
2. Approve the recommended conceptual plan for Villa Park, Project 21-61.
3. Approve Villa-Chiquita Park as the name for the new park.

BACKGROUND

The 0.39-acre park site located on Villa Street, at the Chiquita Avenue intersection, was dedicated to the City for park use by the 1720 Villa Street development project (Figure 1—Project Location). On [January 25, 2022](#), Council authorized a professional services agreement with SSA Landscape Architects in the amount of \$245,000 for the design phase of the park.

The project site was used as a staging area by the developer of the 1720 Villa Street development project during its construction and is now a vacant parcel. The developer has installed temporary irrigation and grass on the site for the community to use as open space while the park project is in development. The developer will maintain the site at no cost to the City, and the temporary improvements will be removed prior to the start of park construction.



Figure 1: Project Location

ANALYSIS

Community Meetings

Two community meetings were held for the future park to obtain community input on the design and amenities. A notice for each meeting was sent to property owners and residents within a 750' radius of the project site. Meeting information was also posted on the City website and Nextdoor.

At the first community meeting, held on August 23, 2022, approximately three people attended the in-person meeting and provided input on the park design. Staff and the consultant team received feedback based on a discussion of the existing conditions of the site and conducted a sticker voting poll on the features the attendees desired for the new park. The features and amenities most voted on in the poll included shade structures, nature themes, and adult game areas.

At the second community meeting, held on October 18, 2022, five members of the community reviewed three conceptual plans for the new park, which included the features and amenities identified by attendees at the first meeting. The concepts presented, shown in Attachment 1, included nature-themed climbing and play structures, game tables, open lawn space, bicycle racks, a drinking fountain, picnic tables, and benches.

Following the presentation of the concepts, attendees voted using color-coded dot stickers to indicate their preferences. Overall, Concepts B and C obtained the most favorable votes along with support for the natural climbing elements and request for some game tables. Concept C did not include a playground structure, which is atypical of parks in Mountain View; therefore, this concept was not developed further. Inclusion of a star theme or elements was also suggested in relation to the potential “Estrella Park” name.

Additional Design Concepts Incorporating Relevant Parks and Recreation Commission Feedback Regarding Evelyn Park

Typically, after the second community meeting, any suggested modifications and feedback are incorporated into a single recommended alternative presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC). In this case, the modifications were paused due to PRC feedback received for a similar small park project, Evelyn Park, which is under design at the same time as Villa Park. Evelyn Park concepts were presented to the PRC on [November 9, 2022](#) and [March 8, 2023](#) to obtain its recommendations to Council for the conceptual plan and park naming. The PRC discussed the Evelyn Park concepts presented at the meetings and provided feedback on changes to features and themes. Since the Villa Park community input process was very similar to Evelyn Park’s, and given their comparable size and program, staff determined that many of the Evelyn Park PRC comments were relevant to the Villa Park project as well. The general direction from the PRC on Evelyn Park was to relate the park design to the surrounding development’s architecture, utilize more of the adjacent circulation, use neutral-color play surfacing, incorporate natural play elements and a central gathering area, and avoid fragmented spaces within the park. Therefore, staff reviewed the PRC’s recent Evelyn Park feedback, worked with the consultant to provide more information, and revised the Villa Park concepts accordingly. Using the concepts previously presented at the second community meeting as a basis, two new concepts were prepared: Concepts D and E (Attachment 2). Attachment 3 summarizes the PRC’s prior Evelyn Park comments relevant to Villa Park and how each comment was addressed in Concepts D and E.

Parks and Recreation Commission Review of Villa Park

On [April 12, 2023](#), staff presented revised Concepts D and E to the PRC.

The PRC selected Concept D and suggested staff make the following additional modifications before bringing a revised final version to Council for approval:

- Include game tables;
- Reduce the size of the playground;
- Provide a larger open area;
- Add an entry feature;
- Create a landmark terminus with specimen or fruit trees at the end of Chiquita Avenue by shifting the large center specimen tree in plaza circle east;
- Include unobtrusive fencing around the park perimeter that minimizes visual impact and keeps an open feeling;
- Provide natural climbing elements at the playground;
- Provide at least two swings;
- Provide bike racks; and
- Incorporate a native plant pallet that supports pollinators as part of the detailed design phase.

The recommended modified Concept D, shown in Figure 2 below, incorporates this PRC feedback.



Figure 2: Revised Concept D

Staff recommends that Council approve the modified Concept D as the conceptual plan for the park site.

Park Naming

Staff initiated the park naming process at the second community meeting and posted a request for park name submissions on Nextdoor and the City website soliciting responses through January 31, 2023. City Council Policy K-17 states that a park may be named for a school on which it is located, a street it is adjacent to, a local landmark, or a historical figure. Other park names will be considered only if one of the above criteria do not provide a name suitable for the park.

Table 1 provides the park names received that meet the Council Policy K-17 naming criteria and were presented at the [April 12, 2023 PRC meeting](#). Additional park name suggestions received that did not meet the criteria are included in the PRC meeting memo.

Table 1: Suggested Park Names

Suggested Park Name	Council Policy K-17 Relevance
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/Jackson Street by Bailey Avenue widening in 1969.
Bailey Park	Former House 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.
Rosemary Stasek Park	Former City Councilmember and Mayor, a supporter of parks.

At the PRC meeting, staff recommended the consideration of the following two names:

- Villa-Chiquita Park
- Estrella Park

“Villa-Chiquita Park” was suggested by residents based on the future park location being adjacent to Villa Avenue and Chiquita Avenue.

“Estrella Park” was suggested by residents based on the future park proximity to Shoreline Boulevard (formerly Bailey Avenue) to honor the Mexican-American community that was displaced by the Bailey Avenue project. Club Estrella, which is still an active organization, was the primary social club of the Mexican-American community that was displaced. The Mountain View Historical Association noted that from a geographic standpoint, names honoring this Mexican-American community may be most appropriate north of Central Expressway (the community was centered on Washington Street/Jackson Street at Bailey Avenue). 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 is a social club that meets at various locations.

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 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.

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.

On April 12, 2023, the PRC discussed the naming options and recommended, in no particular order, the following two naming options for City Council consideration:

- Villa-Chiquita Park—Based on the two street names that intersect where the future park is located.
- Estrella Park—With a possible star theme and acknowledgment of Club Estrella.

Villa-Chiquita Park is recommended by staff because it meets the City Council Policy for park naming and is consistent with many recent new parks named after the streets they are located on or nearby. Should Council approve staff's recommendation, staff will work with Club Estrella on placing signage within the park to provide historical information about Club Estrella.

Public Art

Pursuant to Council Policy K-5, with a construction budget in excess of \$1 million, 2% of the construction budget is allocated for public art. At the [April 12, 2023](#) PRC meeting, the PRC requested staff work with the Visual Arts Committee (VAC) to integrate the public art into the park frontage fencing and the park elements as well as support the thematic concept of the park.

After Council approves a conceptual design, staff will initiate the public art selection process with the VAC and bring a recommendation for the public art in fall 2023 for Council's consideration.

Environmental Clearance

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), staff has reviewed the scope of this project and determined that it meets the classification for categorically exempt as Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land. The proposed site is a vacant parcel that has no environmentally sensitive elements and is being developed into a small public park. Staff recommends Council make findings that, in accordance with the CEQA requirements, the project is categorically exempt as Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, under CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations) Section 15304.

Next Steps

If Council approves the recommended conceptual plan for the park, staff will work with the design consultants to complete final design of the project by early 2024. At that time, staff will

return to Council for approval of the construction documents and authorization to bid the project. Park construction is anticipated to begin by summer 2024 and be completed in early 2025.

FISCAL IMPACT

Villa Park, Project 21-61, is funded in the amount of \$2,150,000 from the Park Land Dedication Fund. The estimated construction cost for the recommended concept is within the construction budget of \$1.4 million. No additional appropriation is requested at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve a different conceptual plan or modify the recommended conceptual plan.
2. Select Estrella Park or another name for the park.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the standard agenda posting, notices were sent to property owners and residents within 750' of the project site. A notice was also posted on the City's website.

Prepared by:

Faryal Saiidnia
Senior Project Manager

Approved by:

Dawn S. Cameron
Public Works Director

Reviewed by:

David O. Printy
Principal Project Manager

Audrey Seymour Ramberg
Assistant City Manager

Edward Arango
Assistant Public Works Director/
City Engineer

FS/LL/6/CAM
977-06-13-23CR-1
202174

Attachments: 1. Conceptual Plans A, B, and C Presented in the October 18, 2022 Community Meeting
2. Conceptual Plans D and E Presented in the April 12, 2023, PRC Meeting
3. Recent PRC Evelyn Park Input Incorporated into Villa Park

cc: APWD—Arango, PPM, SPM—Saiidnia, SMA—Doan, SMA—Goedicke, F/c (21-61)